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The purpose of this study was to gain a clearer understanding of how undergraduate Experiential Learning facilitates leadership identity among female college students. The higher education research literature focuses on the leadership development of White males primarily, without examining the Experiential Learning component of a college education with regard to leadership outcomes. Most studies on leadership in higher education use a quantitative approach with leadership survey instruments. Using an interpretive research paradigm and building on previous research literature examining leadership identity in college students, the researcher asked six female college graduates about the role of Experiential Learning in their leadership identity. The students' four year-end legacy papers from their leadership program were examined as well. The data revealed that Undergraduate Leadership, Volunteer Service, Study Abroad, and Internships had a positive impact on leadership outcomes for the participants. Ultimately, this study revealed that this style of learning did facilitate leadership identity in female students who might not otherwise have reached full leadership identity due to their initial perceptions of leaders as being central, positional, and authoritative rather than approaching leadership as shared, collaborative, and relational.

THE IMPACTS OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING ON LEADERSHIP IDENTITY IN
FEMALE COLLEGE GRADUATES

by

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Approved by

Dr. Deborah J. Taub
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To my beautiful daughter, Kristin.

Never stop believing in your ability to positively affect the lives of others.

You can do anything you want to do if you just trust in the Lord to guide you.

APPROVAL PAGE

This dissertation has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of the Graduate School at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

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Higher Education is truly my passion. Having worked in Higher Education for many years, I truly value the growth and development that occurs in an educational environment. I love to sit through each Freshmen Convocation and watch the new freshmen class walk through the faculty lines excited to see what college has to offer them. I also love to sit through graduation each year and watch the exiting senior class walk through the same faculty lines to see what they, with the college education, can offer the world. This is a confirmation of the fact that all of us in the campus community make meaningful contributions to the lives of others. I am so appreciative of the opportunity to have earned this Ph.D. in Higher Education and have enjoyed every step of this journey.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Leadership is an important outcome of undergraduate education. Upon graduation, men often identify as leaders, but this is less common for women (Astin & Astin, 2000; Kezar & Moriarty, 2000; Shertzer & Schuh, 2004). This reluctance to assume a leadership identity is problematic because civic engagement and career success often require women to assume leadership roles. Before women can accept leadership positions, however, they must see themselves as leaders. One possible solution to this issue is long-term leadership development programs in higher education. Unfortunately, long-term training such as multi-semester leadership programs, leadership certificate programs, leadership minors or majors, emerging leaders programs, or living-learning programs have proven less effective for female participants than for male participants (HERI, 1996). One probable explanation for this difference in effectiveness may be that women tend to learn leadership through personal experience and direct application as opposed to learning leadership through passive participation in training programs. Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule (1986), in their study of “Women’s Ways of Knowing,” described one characteristic way of knowing as “connected” knowing, where knowing is through relationships with other people and the knower believes the most trustworthy knowledge comes from direct, personal experiences rather than from proclamations by authority. It may prove beneficial to the development of leadership

identity in women to incorporate Experiential Learning into leadership development programs in higher education.

Further, higher education researchers (Calizo, Cilente, & Komives, 2007) have associated short-term leadership training such as workshops, retreats, conferences, or lectures with leadership development both for men and women. Other than these findings, little is known about how the college experience (programs, experiences, relationships, and other factors in the collegiate environment) actually influences leadership identity development in college women. This is true despite the prominence of leadership development in most institutions' missions in higher education. If undergraduate programs are to prepare women for leadership roles, educators must learn how to promote leadership identity among female undergraduates.

Studies Addressing the Problem

Student leadership programs have been addressed in higher education literature (Cress, Astin, Zimmerman-Oster, & Burkhardt, 1991; Komives, Owen, Longerbeam, Mainella, & Osteen, 2005; Shertzer & Schuh, 2004), but college administrators still know very little about how different types of learning experiences promote desired outcomes upon graduation. Researchers have explored the relationship between Experiential Learning and leadership (Astin & Astin, 2000; Astin & Sax, 1998; Astin, Vogelgesang, Ikeda, & Yee, 2000; Bialek & Lloyd, 1997; Dugan, 2006b; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Logue, Hutchens, & Hector, 2005; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). For example, Bialek and Lloyd (1997) examined the long-term effects of Experiential Learning in college after graduation. Similarly, Pascarella and Terenzini (1991, 2005) found a direct relationship

between involvement in student organizations and the development of leadership skills. Finally, leadership development programs have been shown to enhance academic performance, self-efficacy, civic engagement, and personal development (Cress et al., 1991).

Recent studies have shown similarities and differences in how men and women develop leadership skills and perceive leadership ability (Baxter-Magolda, 1990; Calizo et al., 2007; Dugan, 2006a; Kezar & Moriarty, 2000; Whitt, 1994). Two notable studies on leadership development have focused solely on women—in women's colleges (Whitt, 1994) and at large universities (Romano, 1996). Romano (1996) examined perceptions of women leaders on campus and found that the lack of peer acceptance can be a deterrent to women student leaders and that some women experience subtle forms of discrimination during college such as not being taken seriously. She found that family members and role models had an effect on initial and continuous involvement in women's Undergraduate Leadership and that observing and emulating behaviors of peer leaders improved leadership skills in women. Whitt (1994) noted that women rely upon different skills from men when leading others and are expected to lead in environments that structure leadership experiences around models that are typically better suited for male leaders and their preferred participative leadership styles with emphasis on relationships, collaboration and community, and the sharing of information and power.

Changes in leadership paradigms in the twenty-first century have placed social responsibility and change for the common good as critical components for effective leadership (HERI, 1996) with Social Change Model of Leadership (SCM). The SCM

addressed student leadership competencies on constructs of Consciousness of Self, Congruence, Commitment, Common Purpose, Collaboration, Controversy with Civility, Citizenship, and Change. Leadership Identity Development (LID) Theory has placed emphasis on the development of leadership identity through the post-industrial paradigm where society is more concerned with knowledge and networking than production (Komives et al., 2005). Leadership development theories are now based on “collaboration, ethical action, moral purposes, and leaders who transform followers into leaders themselves” (p. 593).

Deficiencies in the Literature

Unfortunately, studies in higher education leadership development to date either focus on the educational needs of men or assume that the needs of men and women are the same. This assumption is problematic because women tend to approach leadership differently in that they rely more on collaboration, relationships, and shared power and less on confidence in leadership; they also have perceptions of leadership as more non-positional than positional (Cress et al., 1991; Engbers, 2006; Kezar & Moriarty, 2000; Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 1998; Romano, 1996; Shertzer & Schuh, 2004). Theorists and practitioners have been challenged to expand models of development to include women and other populations of students underrepresented in the literature and on campus. Also, the extant literature addresses leadership development of college students, but what happens after graduation is relatively unknown. Further research needs to include how leadership development during college impacts leadership identity in college students after graduation.

Studies also have focused on leadership theory and skill-sets, but few have considered Experiential Learning as an approach to promoting leadership identity. The relative absence of Experiential Learning merits attention because Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) has been shown to transform experience into knowledge for students who can then use the knowledge for individual and collective development therefore linking education, work, and personal development (Kolb, 1984). Dugan (2006b), for example, found that positional leadership roles, participation in student leadership training, student organization membership, and community service positively affected leadership development. He suggested that further research was needed to distinguish between types of involvement and how this involvement differs across institutions for educators providing intentional and effective student leadership opportunities using more vigorous methodologies.

The Social Change Model of leadership (SCM) has existed for over a decade, yet very few studies (only two published in refereed journals) have attempted to operationalize the model despite its recognition as the most employed college student leadership model at that time (Kezar, Carducci, & Contreras-McGavin, 2006). Most research on college student leadership development is atheoretical, using general measures of leadership rather than those tied specifically to conceptual models designed for college students (Dugan, 2006b).

Further, in spite of the recent increase in literature that focuses on student leadership, few scholars have addressed the development of leadership ability or leadership identity (Komives et al., 2005). Additional research is needed to devise a

model of leadership identity development appropriate for female college students. In order to create effective leadership development programs for female college students, we must first fully understand what types of learning contribute to the development of leadership identities.

Importance of the Study

The findings of this study may inform theory and practice. First, although we know a great deal about student leadership programs and positive impacts of Experiential Learning on other student outcomes, we know very little about leadership identity development in college women based on Experiential Learning. This study fills that gap. Second, college student educators may find these results useful as they plan, design, implement, and assess leadership programs, particularly those involving an Experiential Learning component. These findings should grant greater insight into student leadership development and provide improved leadership development opportunities for college women. Specifically, the findings of this study may enable college student educators to be more intentional in developing leadership identity among female undergraduates.

Purpose Statement

It is reasonable to assume that because ELT has been shown to promote the ability to work cooperatively, appreciation for diversity, critical thinking skills, and a sense of civic responsibility, it also may promote leadership identity. Unfortunately, no one has examined this relationship. The purpose of this study was to gain a clearer understanding of whether, and if so then how, Experiential Learning facilitates leadership identity development among female college graduates. Although opportunities for Experiential

Learning abound in higher education, I focused specifically on Undergraduate Leadership, Service Learning, Internships, Study Abroad, and Volunteer Service incorporated into a single, specific student leadership program. I chose these types of opportunities to examine because they are most often listed in the higher education leadership literature and most common in colleges and universities today. The role of the researcher will be discussed in Chapter III.

Research Questions and Rationale for a Qualitative Study

The following research questions guided this study:

1. How do recent female college graduates perceive their own leadership identity?
2. How do recent female college graduates describe their participation in Experiential Learning (Undergraduate Leadership, Service Learning, Internships, Study Abroad, and Volunteer Service) during college?
3. When considering the acquisition of and growth in leadership identity, what undergraduate experiences are meaningful for recent female college graduates?

Given the nature of these questions, I conducted a qualitative approach to research the connections that female college graduates make between their participation in Experiential Learning participation and their leadership identity. Data collection strategies included phone and Skype interviews with six female leadership program participants who have recently graduated and completed the program, along with documents obtained from the participants at year-end for each of the four years the

participants were in the leadership program. Data were analyzed using triangulation to ensure the overall trustworthiness of the study (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This method of analysis led to a better understanding of how leadership is experienced in female recent college graduates and helps provide a means to structure Experiential Learning as a component of leadership identity.

Summary

There has been an increase in literature on student leadership development. Leadership development models over the years have addressed the element of Experiential Learning (Callahan & Mabey, 1985; Chambers, 1992; Clark, 2001; Engbers, 2006; Komives et al., 2005; Komives, Longerbeam, Owen, Mainella, & Osteen, 2006; Roberts & Ullom, 1989). With this increase on student leadership development, few scholars have chosen to address the development of leadership identity (Komives et al., 2005). The Komives et al. (2006) Leadership Identity Development (LID) model (discussed in more detail in Chapter II) was formed to focus on the development of leadership identity in college students. This model of leadership identity, which addressed a research gap on student leadership development, has stages and entails working with individuals as they develop their leadership identity and working with groups as they develop empowering environments for shared leadership. The framework for the LID model consists of six stages that begin with early recognition that leaders exist and continue through the acceptance of leadership as an important part of self identity.

The assumption of this study is that experiences and reflection interact over the duration of a student's college career and lead to the development of leadership identity. The intention of this study was to compare a university leadership program against the LID model by developing an understanding of the meaning that students make out of this four-year leadership development training. The [Research Site Leadership Program] is based on the SCM and is designed to develop students' understanding of leadership in order to create positive change for the common good. This leadership program includes various types of Experiential Learning.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter, I review the current state of knowledge on Experiential Learning and college student leadership development. The first topic I will discuss is Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) (Kolb & Kolb, 2008) and the impact of different types of Experiential Learning with respect to leadership. I will then discuss leadership with regard to leadership perception, leadership development and identity, and recent developments in student leadership including the Multi-Institutional Study of Leadership (MSL), the Social Change Theory Model of Leadership Development (SCM) (HERI, 1996), and the Leadership Identity Development Model of Leadership (LID) (Komives et al., 2006). In addition, this chapter reviews the literature that addresses ways that gender influences leadership identity.

Experiential Learning

Experiential Learning Theory

John Dewey (1938) proposed that education be designed on the basis of a theory of experience referred to as Experiential Learning. Dewey and more recent educational leaders such as Piaget and Lewin (Kolb & Kolb, 2008) and Schon (1983) felt that reflection is a key element to the learning process and view reflection as a “process of inquiry based on prior understanding where difficult and complex problems are resolved for an immediate purpose as well as generalized to principles in order to solve future

problems” (Murray State website, Retrieved October 2008, from <http://coekate.murraystate.edu/professor/koren/conceptualframework06doc>).

Dewey believed that educators “must understand the nature of how humans have the experiences they do, in order to design effective education” (Neill, 2005, p. 1). Dewey's theory of experience rests on two central tenets, continuity and interaction. Continuity refers to the idea that from every experience a person learns something that is carried into the future; interaction builds on the notion of continuity by explaining the way past experience interacts with the present situation to create one's present experience.

David A. Kolb (1984) described Experiential Learning as “the process whereby knowledge is constructed through the transformation of experience” (p. 41). Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) is based on a learning cycle that includes the dual phases of action/reflection and experience/abstraction (Kolb & Kolb, 2008). The four stages are concrete experience (CE), reflective observation (RO), abstract conceptualization (AC), and active experimentation (AE). These four stages occur in sequence in a cycle that may be entered into from any point but must stay in the correct sequential order and are repeated in a spiral of cycles. Kolb's Experiential Learning circle is shown in Figure 1.

Other researchers have referred to these stages as wanting, doing, feedback, and digesting (Race, 1993); sensing/feeling, watching/reflecting, thinking, and doing (Fielding, 1994); pragmatist, reflector, theorist, and activist (Honey & Mumford, 1986). The two main dimensions to the learning process are the abstract conceptualization-concrete experience (AC-CE) dimension and the active experimentation-reflective

observation (AE-RO) dimension, which correspond to the two different processes by which we learn. The first dimension (AC-CE) is how we grasp or perceive new information, and the second (AE-RO) is how we process what we perceive. The way we grasp or perceive experience ranges from immersing ourselves in the experience through senses and feelings in a “concrete” manner (CE) to thinking in an “abstract” manner through logic and reason (AC) (Healey & Jenkins, 2000). The way we process information ranges from active experimentation (AE) with active involvement to reflective observation (RO) through watching or observing.

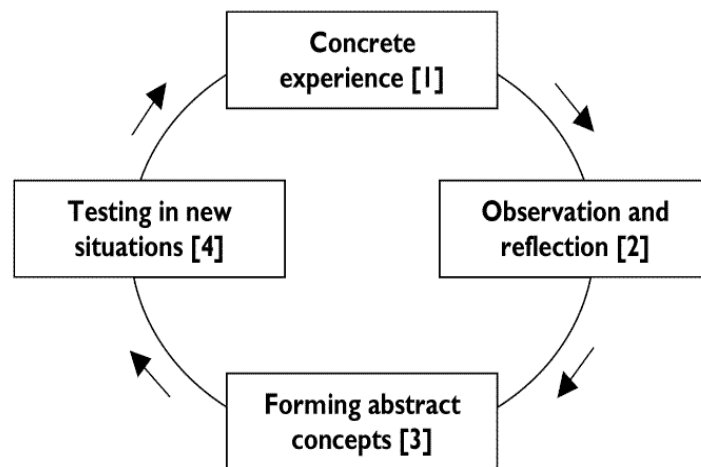


Figure 1. Kolb's Experiential Learning Circle (Smith, 2001)

Students acquire knowledge and learn through lecture and classroom style instruction, but learn best if this instruction is coupled with other instructional methods that facilitate deeper understanding of concepts with the chance for application and reflection (Dewey, 1938; DiConti, 2004; Healey & Jenkins, 2000; Kolb, 1984; Koren, 2008). Following Dewey, Kolb maintained that “an important goal of the experiential

program is to learn how to transform experience into knowledge, and then use this knowledge for individual and collective development” (DiConti, 2004, p. 175). This learning outside the classroom through experience allows for application through the concrete experience and reflective observation. Kolb defined Experiential Learning as “a process linking education, work, and personal development” (Smith & Rosser, 2007, p. 3).

The most common types of Experiential Learning in colleges and universities today are Service Learning, Volunteer Service, Internships, Study Abroad, and Undergraduate Leadership among others (ACPA, 2004; Astin & Astin, 2000; Dugan, 2006b). Service Learning is a pedagogy that combines the concrete experience of community service with reflection observation, which is the academic instruction focusing on critical, reflective thinking. Volunteer Service is student engagement in the community by providing service to a philanthropic organization or a business in the local area with no course credit or connection to academic course material. Internships, which are usually credit-bearing, occur when students participate in field-based education through cooperative education, practicum experiences, or classroom-based hands-on laboratory activities (DiConti, 2004). Study Abroad is defined as any of a number of arrangements by which students complete part of their degree program through educational activities outside the United States. Such activities include, but are not limited to, classroom study, research, internships or externships, and Service Learning (Purdue website, Retrieved on March 4, 2009 from <http://www.studyabroad.purdue.edu/>

faculty/definition.cfm). Undergraduate Leadership programs help students understand the nature of leadership and prepare them to become leaders on campus, in the community, and in their professions. A visual diagram for Leadership Identity supplemented by Experiential Learning is shown in Figure 2.

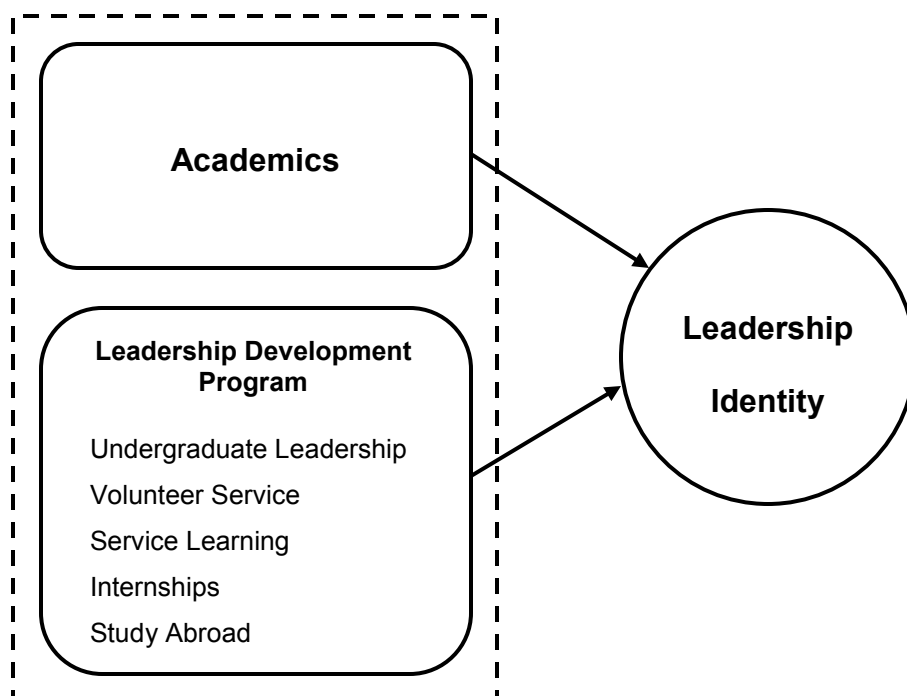


Figure 2. *Leadership Identity Based on Experiential Learning*

Types of Experiential Learning

Service Learning

The direct link between Service Learning and leadership is still vague in the literature. Service Learning allows students to gain real-life experiences by interacting with community partners, develop a sense of community with classmates and local organizations, retain more of what they learn, and explore career options while applying

what they have learned in the classroom through reflection (Purdue website, Retrieved on October 8, 2009 from http://www.purdue.edu/servicelearning/Students/why_service_learning.html).

Reflection, according to Reed and Koliba (1995), provides insight into a student's own self-interests when he or she reflects on how service has made a difference in his or her own life. Reflection allows a student to develop growth and understanding in several areas including: career exploration, civic responsibility, social change/justice, professional development, leadership development, intellectual pursuit, spiritual fulfillment, and political consciousness.

Service Learning has been found to have a positive impact on leadership, although not a strong impact (Astin et al., 2000; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Simons & Cleary, 2005). Astin et al. (2000) provided an executive summary on how Service Learning affects students using a national sample of 22,236 students. The impact of Service Learning was assessed on academic outcomes, values, self-efficacy, leadership, career plans, and plans to participate in service after college. Performing service as part of a course was found to add significantly to the benefits associated with community service for all outcomes except for interpersonal skills, self-efficacy, and leadership with the latter two being border-line ($p < .05$). The leadership measures in the study did not show more benefit from Service Learning than from generic community service for students. Service participation had its strongest effect on the students' decision to pursue a career in a service field. Qualitative findings suggested that Service Learning is effective as it aids in outcomes such as increased personal efficacy, an increased awareness of the world

and personal values, increased engagement in the classroom experience, and a heightened sense of civic responsibility.

Simons and Cleary (2005) conducted a mixed methods study of the value added by Service Learning to the community and to students by examining academic learning, personal and interpersonal development, and community engagement for college students who participated in Service Learning, both from a personal level and from a social level. The study included 59 students who were enrolled in two sections of an educational psychology course at a private university in an eastern metropolitan area during the Spring semester of 2003. These students worked with elementary age children teaching them to read. The results were that service-learners increased their problem-solving skills, political awareness, social justice attitudes, preferences for short-term community involvement, and desire to make a difference in the lives of community recipients from the beginning of the semester to the end. Other findings were that students who made short-term commitments often transitioned to long-term commitments in community service. Other benefits from Service Learning included stronger academic learning, growth in relationships, greater self-knowledge, personal self-efficacy, and career development. This study showed results of a positive effect on outcomes that is important in leadership, but “leadership” was not determined to be an outcome from the Service Learning.

Volunteer Service

Volunteer Service is defined as working in the community merely on a voluntary basis while receiving no academic credits for the hours invested and having no

connection to an academic course. There is substantial research that examines the relationship between Volunteer Service and leadership with positive findings on the effects of community service on leadership development (Astin & Astin, 2000; Astin & Sax, 1998; Dugan, 2006b). Astin and Sax (1998) conducted a study with 3,450 students from 42 institutions on effects of service participation during college years using the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) Freshman Survey and the College Student Survey (CSS) as a follow-up survey. The findings for life skill outcomes showed increased leadership ability and social self-confidence with other positive outcomes for students including enhancement in understanding the world around them and community problems, knowledge and acceptance of different races and cultures, interpersonal skills, improvement in conflict resolution skills and critical thinking, satisfaction in leadership opportunities, more relevance of course work to everyday life, and preparation for future careers.

Astin and Astin (2000), in their book, *Leadership Reconsidered: Engaging Higher Education in Social Change*, noted that student engagement in community service substantially enhances the development of leadership skills. They contend that connections are to be made between the formal classroom learning and the informal out-of-classroom learning activities with outcomes of greater meaning, transforming campuses, and the development of leadership skills. They went on to say students often fail to realize that participating in campus activities such as volunteerism and in student organizations can lead to growth in leadership development as these activities provide an opportunity “to exercise leadership and develop leadership skills” (p. 18). The academic

experience offers opportunities for students to interact with each other, faculty, and community members through Service Learning and Internships. Students involved in active learning through volunteer service versus passive learning develop qualities of competence and commitment. Students in group learning develop qualities of collaboration and shared purpose. These researchers define the co-curricular experience as a concept that involves students in dynamic learning environments outside the classroom, such as community service, where the students:

1. reach a greater depth of understanding of course concepts through practical application (i.e., Service Learning),
2. gain experience that is directly applicable to employment after college,
3. achieve a greater awareness of community needs and societal issues, and
4. create more meaningful relationships with faculty, student affairs educators, and other students. (pp. 21-22)

Undergraduate Student Leadership Development

Undergraduate Leadership programs help students understand the nature of leadership and prepare them to become leaders on campus, in the community, and in their professions. Cress et al. (1991) conducted a study that built upon the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) study, which used the CIRP survey and the CSS survey, by administering 20 supplemental questions to 875 students at 10 sample institutions that were funded for leadership development programs. The Cress et al. study revealed that students who participated in leadership development and training programs showed growth in areas of leadership and understanding of leadership theories, civic

responsibility, multicultural awareness, and personal and societal issues. Three common elements of the leadership programs in this study emerged that directly impacted student development: service, experiential activities such as Internships, and active learning through collaboration.

According to the leadership literature, anyone has the potential to be a leader through experiences and education (Cress et al., 1991; Komives et al., 1998; Swatez, 1995). The findings of Cress et al. (1991) indicated that all students have leadership potential that can be developed through leadership programs and activities. Komives et al. (1998) argued that leadership needs to be learned and practiced as would any other acquired skill. Swatez (1995) believes that teaching leadership to undergraduate students is difficult due to the lack of students' experience. He posits that exposure to different forms of leadership through the bridging of the classroom with the community provides students with a background of knowledge that can be drawn upon to integrate the various leadership theories and skills that are taught and that the successful combination of these two strategies transforms our students into leaders.

Bialek and Lloyd (1997) explored the impact that student leadership experiences during college had on the personal and professional lives of college graduates one to five years after college graduation. Their interest was to explore possible long-term effects from participation in student leadership programs. Their qualitative study, based on interviews conducted by telephone with 26 graduates from a single institution, found connections between the participants' Undergraduate Leadership experiences and the interactions and relationships with a wide range of people, enhanced leadership,

management, and teamwork skills, and an increased sense of pride with regard to their university. The researchers explored how the skills and abilities fostered in Undergraduate Leadership experiences were applicable to participants' lives after college. Three themes emerged: enhanced professional leadership, management, and teamwork skills, improved interpersonal communication skills, and increased self-confidence and professional poise.

Leadership

This section discusses the connection between leadership and Experiential Learning as examined through a 2007 literature review, *Leadership Reconsidered*, leadership perceptions as positional and as non-positional, leadership identity, and recent leadership development models to aid in college students' leadership identity development. Leadership is one of the most essential life skills that students need to develop; colleges and universities today need to provide programs with real-life experiences and collaboration to enhance leadership competencies, abilities, and efficacy (Astin & Astin, 2000).

Leadership and Experiential Learning

Smith and Rosser (2007) reviewed the literature on leadership and Experiential Learning. They defined leadership development as working on "individual-based knowledge, skills, and abilities associated with an actual leadership position or a formal leadership role" (p. 2). They referred to Northouse (2004) who said "skills imply what leaders can accomplish whereas traits imply who leaders are" (p. 2). Smith and Rosser stated that Experiential Learning such as Service Learning, Internships, and

Undergraduate Research help students reach personal and intellectual growth, which they considered the most valuable contributions to development in the undergraduate years. This Experiential Learning gives students the required skills and abilities to be well-rounded individuals, prepares them to enter the workforce with success, and instills life-long learning. Service Learning connects learning in the classroom through lecture and discussion with the real world experiences for which school is supposed to prepare them. Smith and Rosser quoted Ryan (1996) to say the cycle of learning is complete when students can “reframe what they know, the content, and understand how they learned it, the process” (p. 7). Experiential Learning allows students to test what they have learned in the classroom while it also tests whether higher education institutions are doing what they say they are doing, which is to prepare students to be successful adults in society.

Leadership Reconsidered

In *Leadership Reconsidered: Engaging Higher Education in Social Change*, Astin and Astin (2000) addressed the application of transformative leadership to higher education. They considered that “effective leadership is an essential ingredient of positive social change” (p. iv) and that higher education, being a central player in shaping the quality of leadership in America, should strive to produce students who will improve society. Classroom instruction in this study was said to give little attention to the personal qualities that are deemed crucial to effective leadership such as “self-understanding, listening skills, empathy, honesty, integrity, and the ability to work collaboratively” (p. 3). Astin and Astin observed that, although there has been an increased emphasis on co-curricular programs for student leadership development,

institutions still lack requirements or content that focuses on leadership. Although student engagement in community service substantially enhances the development of leadership skills, this co-curricular experience remains essentially marginal on most campuses.

The authors of *Leadership Reconsidered* posited that the basic purposes of leadership development in higher education in the United States are to generate new knowledge, serve the community, and to empower students to become agents of positive social change in the larger community. This development comes from a collaborative educational environment where students can acquire needed knowledge and skills while learning about themselves and other group members and acting as facilitators in the development of competence, self-knowledge, and empathy.

Astin and Astin (2000) stated that leadership is most essential of the life skills that a student learns during the college career with special recognition given to the facts that:

1. leadership is no longer the province of the few, the privileged, or even the merely ambitious, and
2. leadership skills are increasingly among the qualifications needed by employers of all kinds, from private corporations and nonprofit organizations to government agencies and academic institutions. Virtually all of our social institutions are hungry for people who are self-aware, authentic, innovative, empathetic, committed, comfortable working collaboratively, and able to lead constructive change efforts. (p. 31)

Leadership skills can be consciously developed. Learning and applying leadership principles will encourage students to become more deeply involved and committed to shaping the educational experience so they can take advantage of opportunities to practice leadership as members of the campus community and beyond.

Astin and Astin (2000) also believe that by providing programs where students practice and integrate classroom knowledge with real-life experiences and collaborate in group learning, student affairs professionals help enhance students' leadership competence and abilities. These administrators should focus on students' holistic development in terms of academic skills and knowledge, interpersonal communication abilities, and feeling of connectedness to the campus community as to society as a whole. This develops skills in conflict management, team-building, tolerance for difference, communication, reflective questioning, problem-solving, analysis of information and context, and critical thinking with hopes that these students will model the same qualities in their communities after graduation in their roles as professionals, family members, and citizens.

Leadership Perception

As we live in different perceptual worlds today with regard to leadership power, the assumption for this study is that leadership can be either positional or non-positional. Engbers (2006) posited that positional leadership involves an authoritative leader where a gifted person is selected and given the opportunity to lead. Engbers defined non-positional leadership as inclusive, shared, and traded fluidly among a variety of individuals seeking to achieve a common goal, thus, many team dynamics are studied in leadership education. An individual can be a leader in a career or a leader as a change agent in the community or in society as a whole. A good leadership development model should provide framework on how to teach leadership and should address not only the roles of individuals in leadership but also the existence of a group effect and the organic

nature of leadership in group life (Engbers, 2006). In this new era of leadership where group involvement is emphasized over the individual, the assumption is that all have leadership qualities that can be pooled and drawn upon as needed when working with others on vital common issues. It is important for women to realize that leadership is not always positional with a single powerful authority figure, but that leadership can also have more collaborative relational approaches.

Shertzer and Schuh (2004) studied students' perceptions of leadership and how these perceptions empower or constrain students with regard to involvement in leadership. Through interviews, focus groups, and documents' review with 24 student leaders and five disengaged students at a single institution, they found that a student's own definition of leadership influences the degree to which he or she perceives himself or herself to be a leader. The emergent themes from this study were leadership as an individual possession, leadership as positional, leaders possess certain qualities and skills, and leaders act from internal motivations. Their findings were that disengaged students were less confident and did not believe in their ability or competence to be in a leadership position. "A student's definition of leadership may play a significant role in whether or not the student perceives him/herself as a leader" (p. 112).

Leadership Identity

Identity as a concept is as elusive as is everyone's sense of his or her own personal identity and is "connected to the fateful appraisals made of oneself - by oneself and others" (Strauss, 1969, p. 9). In spite of the recent increase in literature that focuses on student leadership, few scholars have addressed the development of leadership ability

or leadership identity (Komives et al., 2005). In the new post-industrial era, society is now more concerned with knowledge and networking than in the older leadership theories. Society now calls for new leadership development theories that are based on “collaboration, ethical action, moral purposes, and leaders who transform followers into leaders themselves” (p. 593). In order to create effective leadership development programs, one must first fully understand how leadership identities are formed.

Personal values, group norms, cognitive development, and perceived need to realize a vision are underlying notions of developing a leadership identity (HERI, 1996; Komives et al., 1998; Komives, Casper, Longerbeam, Mainella, & Osteen, 2004). A handful of leadership models have incorporated these factors; two that have made major contributions to scholarship and practice in higher education are the Social Change Model of Leadership Development (HERI, 1996) and the Relational Leadership Model (Komives et al., 2004). These models provide the conceptual framework for the Leadership Identity Model developed by Komives et al. (2005), which reveals the similarities between leadership development and student development. Students are simultaneously developing across multiple models in Komives et al.’s Leadership Identity Model, Perry’s (1970) Intellectual and Ethical Model, and Chickering’s (1969) Personal Identity Model. In Perry’s (1970) model of intellectual development, students advance through stages of dualism, multiplicity, relativism, and commitment. It is during the stage of relativism that students start out viewing concepts in black and white and end up viewing the same concepts in shades of gray. In Chickering’s (1969) model of psychosocial development, students advance through stages of developing competence,

managing emotions, moving through autonomy toward interdependence, developing mature interpersonal relationships, establishing identity, developing purpose, and developing integrity. The stages that students advance through in the LID Model are discussed later in this chapter.

Recent Development in Higher Education Leadership Development

Multi-Institutional Study of Leadership

The Multi-Institutional Study of Leadership (MSL) was a national study with data collected in 2006 from 56,584 students at 52 different institutions of higher learning across the United States examining leadership development and college student leadership outcomes (Dugan & Komives, 2007). Researchers at the University of Maryland-College Park used an instrument that was a modified version of Tyree's (1998) Socially Responsible Leadership Scale (SRLS) and was framed on SCM. This study addressed the challenges of developing leadership in college students due to a significant gap between theory and practice, an unclear picture of the leadership development needs in college students, and the uncertainty with regard to the influences of the college environment on leadership outcomes. In this study, it was shown that college experiences matter; students who were involved in campus clubs and organizations scored higher across all of the SCM values. The study addressed student involvement and its influences across 21 types of co-curricular experiences. Twenty percent of the students reported never having participated in a campus organization, whereas forty percent of the students in the study reported heavy involvement on campus. The amount of involvement was positively related to the level of development; however, breadth of

involvement, being involved in too many organizations, was negatively related to leadership outcomes. The study showed that patterns of involvement reflecting traditional collegiate experiences, such as co-curricular group experiences, demonstrated high degrees of influence as evidenced by the strength of their association with higher leadership scores. Leadership outcomes showed high scores on the value of Commitment and low scores on the value of Change. Other findings were that student perceptions changed over time; pre-college experience matters; leadership shows moderate gender, racial, and ethnic differences; openness to change is greater for marginalized groups of students; socio-cultural discussions matter a great deal; mentoring matters; campus involvement matters; service matters; positional leadership roles develop leadership; and formal leadership programs matter.

Social Change Model of Leadership (SCM)

The Social Change Model of Leadership (SCM) was designed collaboratively by Helen and Alexander Astin and other scholars. This model of leadership development is grounded in social responsibility and change for the common good (HERI, 1996) and served later as the framework for Leadership Identity Development Model (LID) study. This model further describes students in growth across eight critical core values: Consciousness of Self; Congruence; Commitment; Common Purpose; Collaboration; Controversy with Civility; Citizenship; and Change for the Common Good from interactions between individual, group, and society with change being the overall goal (Dugan, 2006a). These values interact dynamically across three levels: (a) individual (consciousness of self, congruence, and commitment), (b) group (collaboration, common

purpose, and controversy with civility), and (c) society (citizenship). SCM defines leadership as a purposeful, collaborative, values-based process that results in positive social change (Dugan & Komives, 2007). This model has the basic premise of leadership as both positional and non-positional and leadership as a process rather than a position. It also promotes the values of equity, social justice, self-knowledge, service, and collaboration. The focus of this model is on the individual's level of self-knowledge and also on the capacity to engage others in collaborative work.

Dugan (2006a) examined leadership styles of 410 college men and 443 college women at a single large, public, doctoral-granting institution in the west using SCM. He found differences between men and women when measuring leadership development across the eight constructs of this model. Women scored higher than men on all eight of the leadership constructs. All of these differences were significant except for the collaboration construct; this contradicted previous research indicating that women use collaboration and shared decision-making more regularly than men. Univariate analysis indicated that students struggle with controversy with civility, citizenship, and change constructs regardless of gender and that the type of involvement affected type of development along general measures of leadership with community service as the most influential type. The results of this study have potential to impact women's leadership experiences on campuses with advice to deconstruct persisting stereotypes that contribute to women's lack of self-confidence, understand institutional opportunities for women, and tap into women's skills as they relate to SCM. Dugan further recommended incorporating Service Learning and community service opportunities to allow reflection

to connect students' values with their work in the community. The model, SCM, which provided the framework for the LID Model this study draws upon, is shown in Figure 3.

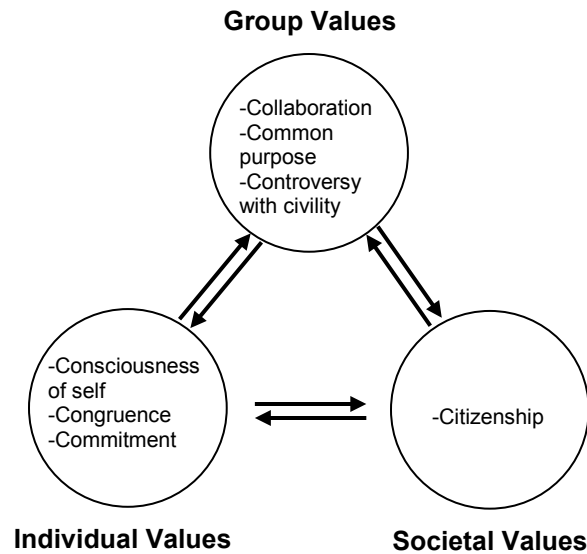


Figure 3. *Social Change Model (SCM)*

The following are the eight constructs of SCM:

1. Consciousness of self—being self-aware of the beliefs, values, attitudes and emotions that motive you to take action
2. Congruence—acting in ways that are consistent with your values and beliefs
3. Commitment—having significant investment in an idea or person, both in terms of intensity and duration
4. Collaboration—working with others in a common effort, sharing responsibility, authority, and accountability
5. Common Purpose—having shared aims and values, involving others in building a group's vision and purpose

6. Controversy with civility—recognizing two fundamental realities of any creative effort, differences in viewpoint are inevitable, such differences must be aired openly and with civility
7. Citizenship—believing in a process whereby an individual and/or group must become responsibly connected to the community and to society through some activity, recognizing individuals and groups have responsibility for the welfare of others
8. Change—believing in the importance of making a better world and a better society for oneself and others; believing that individuals, groups, and communities have the ability to work together to make that change.

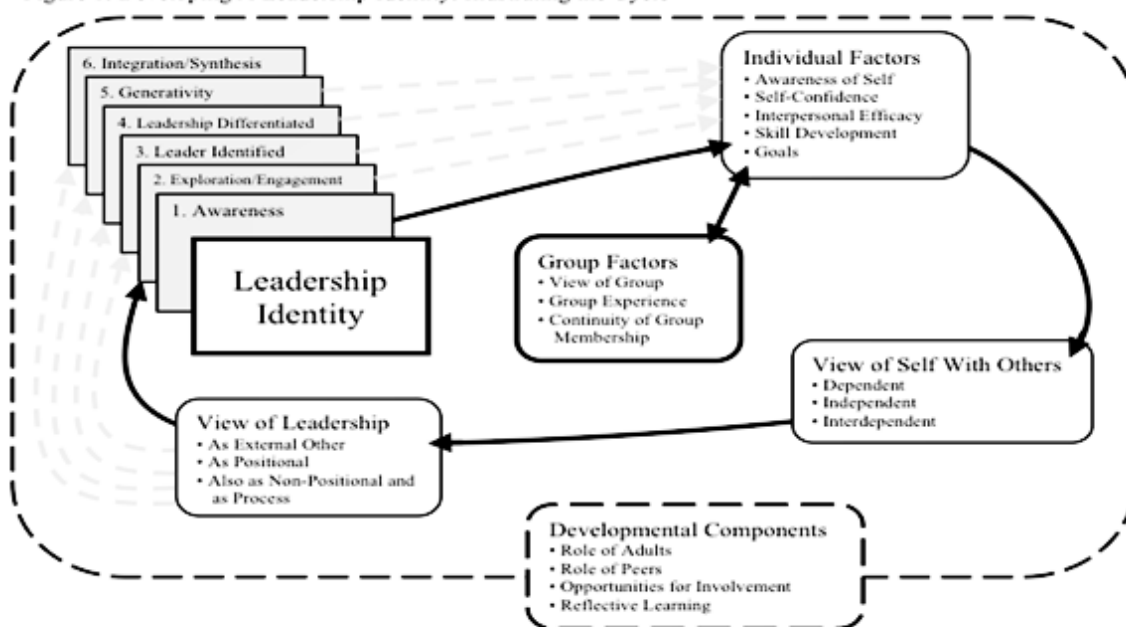
Leadership Identity Development Model (LID)

The Leadership Identity Development (LID) Model resulted from a grounded theory study (Komives et al., 2006) focusing on the developmental aspects of leadership and informed by social learning theory (Bandura, 1997), which presents influences for development of self-efficacy. Thirteen diverse students were selected for this study from students who worked inclusively with others in group process, were committed to ethical processes and heightened involvement, were able to work toward common goals, and thus were engaged in relational leadership. This group was comprised of 5 women and 8 men, including 8 White students, 3 African American students, 1 Asian American student, and 1 African student who immigrated as a child. These students were nominated through intensity sampling by campus experts, including campus activities staff, residence life staff, and advisors to groups such as ethnic and cultural groups, as

well as ODK honor society. The five influencing categories were “broadening view of leadership, developing self, group influences, developmental influences, and the changing view of self with others” (p. 6). Developing self included the deepening of self-awareness, self-confidence, interpersonal efficacy, new skill application, along with motivations. Group influences included learning from membership continuity in groups and changing perceptions of groups. The development influences included adult and peer influences, meaningful involvement, and reflective learning. Changing view of self with others was influenced through the interaction of developing self and influences and included properties of being dependent and independent. Students moved through these stages informed by their experiences in these categories. The leadership development model, LID, consistent with the post-industrial paradigm, which guides this study is shown in Figure 4.

This cyclical model allows students to repeat stages with deeper and more complex understanding and performance in each repeated stage. Achievement in each stage is influenced by contextual factors in the environment and by each student’s readiness. Environmental factors and the presence of mentors were shown to be important in facilitating transitions through the stages. Reflection occurs as subjective while a student is in each stage and moves to objective as the student surpasses the stage. Transition is when a student may seek to reject or find dissonance with his or her old self and where a student could be at risk to retreat or escape (Perry, 1981). A student is secure once integration is achieved and he or she becomes immersed in a stage.

Figure 1: Developing A Leadership Identity: Illustrating the Cycle



From “Developing a Leadership Identity: A Grounded Theory,” by S. R. Komives, J. E. Owen, S. D. Longersbeam, F. C. Mainella, and L. Osteen, 2005, *Journal of College Student Development*, 46(6), 593-611. Reprinted with permission.

Figure 4. Leadership Identity Development Model (LID)

Stage one is “Awareness” where students begin recognizing that leadership is happening out there somewhere and they begin to verbalize making a difference and accomplishing goals. Stage two is “Exploration/Engagement” where students begin interacting with peers by exploring opportunities in group settings thus building self-confidence and self-efficacy. This is when students join organizations and observe their leaders without formally becoming leaders themselves. Stage three is “Leader Identified” and occurs when students hold leader-centric views and believe that one person can be the positional leader. Students here realize they can become leaders through positions they take and may connect to mentors or find organizations to fit their values and interests in this stage. Stage four is “Leadership Differentiated” and is where students

begin to view leadership being exhibited by non-positional group members rather than merely by the positional leader. This is the stage in which students learn teamwork skills and communication skills such as listening and empathy, build group community, and handle group conflict. Stage five is “Generativity” where students look beyond themselves and express a passion and commitment for the welfare of others such as peace, justice, and serving others. Students could learn to mentor new members, set up structures for mentoring, help other students identify their personal passions and commitments, have other students examine their goals, and teach other students to see the perspectives of the groups they inhabit. Stage six is “Integration/Synthesis” where students view themselves as effective in working with others and build the confidence with the ability to do so in almost any context. In this stage, students should be able to identify their personal values about working with others in group settings as well as the talents and strengths they can bring to a group. Students should move into stage six as they end their college careers and transition from the educational context.

According to Komives et al. (2006), students in the study viewed leadership as hierarchical when they came to college, with the traditional approaches being trait, behavioral and situational. This model incorporates elements of inclusiveness, purpose, empowerment, and reflection on the students’ experiences with others in their environment. Students, by using this model, were able to then view leadership as “something many in a group do and as a process among people, which is consistent with the post-industrial view of leadership” (p. 23).

The following are the six stages of LID:

1. Awareness—"Other people are leaders; leadership exists somewhere."
2. Exploration/Engagement—"I want to be involved."
3. Leader Identified—"A leaders gets things done; I am the leader and others follow me."
4. Leadership Differentiated—"I can be a leader even if I'm not the leader; we are all doing leadership together."
5. Generativity—"I am responsible to my communities and the future of them; I am responsible for developing the leadership of others."
6. Integration/Synthesis—"I know I am able to work effectively with others to accomplish changes from anywhere in the organization."

Gender and Leadership Development/Identity

Findings from recent studies (Dugan, 2006a; Calizo et al., 2007; Kezar & Moriarty, 2000; Sax, 2008; Whitt, 1994) have shown both similarities and differences in how men and women develop leadership skills and perceive their leadership ability. Calizo et al. (2007) discussed findings from the 2005-2006 MSL study to compare the leadership development of men and women by looking at the impact of diversity discussions, leadership training, community service, and mentoring opportunities. The MSL measured students' self-efficacy (confidence in leadership ability) and the eight outcomes associated with the Socially Responsible Leadership Scale (SRLS). Using scales of leadership self-efficacy, consciousness of self, commitment, congruence, collaboration, common purpose, controversy with civility, citizenship, and change, women students scored higher than men on all scales except for change and self-efficacy.

Differences were experienced in leadership training through workshops, lectures, conferences, or retreats, with a more positive impact on men than women. Community service had an impact on women for consciousness of self and change and had a positive impact for all categories of leadership outcomes for men. Peer mentoring had the greatest effect on women in commitment, common purpose, and citizenship outcomes, though mentoring relationships with faculty, student affairs staff, or other students had positive impacts on both men and women in general.

Whitt (1994) studied gender differences as they apply to student leadership by visiting three four-year women's colleges and interviewing 200 students, alumni, faculty, and administrators. Whitt discussed the fact that women are attending college in record numbers but do not have the proper tools to lead successfully. She noted that women rely upon different skills from men when leading others and often favor a participative leadership style. Whitt stated that women as leaders place greater importance on relationships, seek collaboration and community, and are more willing to share information and power than men as leaders. However, women are expected to lead in environments that structure leadership experiences around models that are typically better suited for male leaders and their preferred leadership styles. Though noting that women's colleges promote women's leadership well, Whitt's study identified several ways in which coeducational colleges and universities can foster and develop leadership potential among their women students. Findings suggested that promoting women to high profile leadership positions on campus and including programs explicitly designed for women

such as all-female leadership programs, women's social and service sororities, and female residence halls can foster female leadership development.

Kezar and Moriarty (2000), in a quantitative study of almost 10,000 students, examined the ways that White women and African American men and women develop leadership skills and leadership ability. They challenged theorists and practitioners to expand models of development to include women and other underrepresented populations of students as most research in the past on students' leadership development had used White men. Other researchers have been debating the needs of different populations after discovering that women, as well as African Americans or other racial and ethnic groups, struggle to find common experiences with White men due to the way they experience the social world (Belenky et al., 1986; Gilligan, 1982). Kezar and Moriarty (2000) found that regardless of race, men usually have a higher self-perception of themselves as leaders than women, both upon entering college and after graduating college. The findings also suggested that men were able to take better advantage of opportunities to continue their development in leadership skills during college or that perhaps the opportunities to develop these skills are a "better fit for men or were developed with this population in mind" (p. 61). These researchers called for further examination of college factors that impact change in self-concept related to leadership and the development of leadership skills beginning in students' first year at a university. "Co-curricular experiences, typically designed to develop leadership among students, seem to be working to enhance self-perception of leadership ability for White men. White men appear to be gaining in

perceptions of leadership ability in large part due to their participation in out-of-classroom activities” (p. 62).

Sax (2008) synthesized the findings on gender differences based on students who entered colleges nationwide over the past four decades using the CIRP and CSS surveys. She noted that the ability to develop leadership skills depends on having opportunities to do so for both college men and women with aspects of academic and extracurricular engagement. This engagement can account for high levels of self-confidence exhibited in leadership and in social skills. Sax listed important aspects of leadership development specific to women such as attending college farther away from home and gaining distance from parents, involvement on campus, and choice of major with higher-than-average gains for women majoring in business and lower-than-average gains for women majoring in the biological science fields. Interestingly, her findings for important aspects of leadership development specific to men include higher ratio of female faculty members and full-time employment through college.

Since Chickering’s 1969 publication on student development, research has shown that men and women experience vectors involving autonomy and mature interpersonal relationships in different ways (Foubert, Nixon, Sisson, & Barnes, 2005; Taub, 1995). Chickering’s original assertion that a student must establish autonomy before developing the capacity for intimacy in mature interpersonal relationships has been questioned. Studies have shown that women tend to develop intimacy prior to autonomy and that women develop greater capacity for intimacy than do men (Straub, 1987). Most women go through the “developing mature interpersonal relationships” vector prior to going

through the “autonomy” vector. Chickering and Reisser’s (1993) revision to the original 1969 theory moved the vector of developing mature interpersonal relationships “back in sequence, prior to establishing identity. We did this primarily to recognize the importance of students’ experiences with relationships in the formation of their core sense of self” (p. 39). Research has shown that women’s sense of self is related to being able to make and maintain relationships (Gilligan, 1982). This may lend insight to the findings that women tend to prefer more collaborative styles of leadership (Boatwright & Egidio, 2003; Kezar & Moriarty, 2000; Northouse, 2001). In her book, *In a Different Voice*, Gilligan (1993) discussed the differences in psychological development between men and women and believed that women experience relationships and issues of dependency differently than men. She suggested that masculine identity is defined through separation and feminine identity through attachment, and thus men tend to lead through individual process whereas women tend to lead through collaborative process.

Summary of Literature Review

The literature covered in this review represents key theoretical and empirical contributions that directly influence the understanding of Experiential Learning and its influence on leadership identity. The theoretical models for this study are Kolb’s Experiential Learning Theory and Komives et al.’s Leadership Identity Development model.

Research connecting involvement in co-curricular Experiential Learning and leadership identity is observed in the literature. However, ways that leadership is defined and measured in higher education, and often not grounded in theory, present disconnects

between research, theory and practice. When not measured in terms of the post-industrial paradigm, leadership maintains the centrality of position and power, which presents yet another constraint. Experiential Learning has become a more common pedagogy for student development outcomes and types of Experiential Learning include holding leadership positions, studying abroad, and participating in Service Learning, Community Service, and Internships. Experiential Learning is a growing phenomenon in higher education and has proven to have positive effects on leadership identity. Few studies have shown how the various types of individual and group activities and patterns of student involvement across multiple experiences affect leadership identity. This is critical because it would address which education experiences best serve student leadership identity development.

Leadership development programs in higher education in the post-industrial era include SCM (HERI, 1996), the Social Relational Leadership Model (Komives et al., 1998), and LID (Komives et al., 2005). LID reveals similarities that exist between leadership development and student development. Students develop identity across multiple models simultaneously including Chickering's (1969) Personal Identity Model, Perry's (1970) Intellectual and Ethical Model, and Komives et al.'s Leadership Identity Model (LID).

In this study, I drew from Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) and propose that different types of Experiential Learning occur that lead to the development of leadership identity as learners make meaning of their experiences. The framework in this study, associated with active learning, reflects the importance of Experiential

Learning through collaborative inquiry, problem-posing and problem-solving, Service Learning, Volunteer Service and leadership, practicum and Internships, and field experiences. Prior research has suggested the need to study populations other than White males, to study impacts after college graduation, and to study learning styles (Kezar & Moriarty, 2000; Posner, 2004). This study examined the leadership identity perceptions of women after participating in out-of-classroom activities with leadership development as the goal.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to gain a clearer understanding of how Experiential Learning facilitates leadership identity development among female college students. Previous research has focused on the leadership development of White males and has not examined the Experiential Learning component of a college education with regard to leadership outcomes. Also, most studies on leadership in higher education use a quantitative approach with leadership survey instruments. In order to address these shortcomings, I sought to develop an understanding of leadership identity development in women during college through Experiential Learning. This chapter describes the design of the study, the research site and participants, methods of data collection, data analysis procedures, the role of the researcher, as well as issues of validity and ethics.

A qualitative approach was utilized to answer the following research questions:

1. How do recent female college graduates perceive their own leadership identity?
2. How do recent female college graduates describe their participation in Experiential Learning during college?

3. When considering the acquisition of and growth in leadership identity, what undergraduate experiences are meaningful for recent female college graduates?

Design of the Study

In order to analyze the change in participants' understanding of leadership, the meaning they make of their Experiential Learning, their perceptions of their own leadership identity, and the relationships they see between their Experiential Learning and their leadership identity, this study utilized a qualitative research paradigm. The qualitative approach is useful when the researcher is concerned with meanings drawn by participants, understanding processes that influence particular actions, understanding a particular context, and identifying unexpected influences (Maxwell, 2005). Also, qualitative research has a potential contribution in the field of student development:

Judicious and creative qualitative, naturalistic, or ethnographic approaches may simply be better and more sensitive ways of capturing many of the subtle and fine-grained complexities of college impact than more traditional quantitative approaches. (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, p. 463)

This research was based on the interpretive case analysis approach. Interpretive research is a methodology rooted in understanding the complex and constructed reality from the point of view of those who lived the experiences (Schram, 2006). According to Merriam (1998), a case study is characterized by three major features. First, a case study is particularistic in that it focuses on a particular program, event, situation, or phenomenon. Second, the case study is descriptive in that it involves a rich, thick

description of the phenomenon being studied. This description is often supported by direct quotes from the transcripts or documents or other qualitative data. Third, a case study is heuristic in that it illuminates understanding of the phenomenon being studied by providing new insights or extending their experiences about the phenomenon. In this study, the case is defined as the undergraduate, four-year, leadership program at a medium sized, private, four-year institution in the Southeast. Although many things were happening for these students throughout their years at the institution (developmental maturation, classes, relationships), this case study is concerned only with the experience of the leadership program.

I chose to examine the connections that female college graduates make between their participation in Experiential Learning and their leadership identity from a qualitative research paradigm because I wanted to provide the freedom for individuals to describe their leadership identity development experiences with personal richness and depth that is not prevalent in the student leadership literature that has used quantitative methods. The primary reason this study utilized a qualitative approach is that no specific information has been published that examines how Experiential Learning plays a role in female college students' leadership identity upon graduation. This research design employed interviews and allowed for different variables and unique elements of student experiences to surface rather than having the students respond to predetermined outcomes measured in student leadership instruments.

Research Site

I used a purposeful selection (Maxwell, 2005) where “particular settings, persons and activities are selected deliberately in order to provide information that can’t be gotten as well from other choices” (p. 88) in choosing the research site and participants for this study. The university in this study, a medium private, liberal arts university, is centrally located in North Carolina and has an undergraduate population of about 5000 students. This university is an intentionally engagement-rich higher education institution and has an Experiential Learning Requirement (ELR) that every student must fulfill in order to graduate. All Experiential Learning that students participate in is tracked and recorded so these students can give Experiential Learning transcripts along with academic transcripts to potential employers after graduation.

The six participants were recent female college graduates from this university who participated in the four-year leadership development program during their college careers. I obtained an agency letter in support of this study from the university’s Office of Leadership, which I included in my request for IRB approval from The University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Once approval was granted from UNCG, I obtained approval from the research site institution’s IRB. I then worked with the Office of Student Leadership at the research institution to recruit participants. The Director of Leadership Programs and his assistants contacted recent graduates from the Class of 2008 until they had six willing graduates for me to invite for the study.

Because this university is engagement-rich, I wanted to examine the impact of Experiential Learning on leadership identity at this particular institution. Because women

tend to view leadership as positional and powerful with single authority while preferring more collaborative relational approaches, the Leadership Identity Model (LID) could be a good starting point for colleges and universities today to help female students gain understandings of leadership, whether positional or non-positional, and work to acquire the skills needed to be a leader. In this study, I looked at the university's leadership program to examine the acquisition of leadership identity/efficacy based on the stages of Leadership Identity Development LID Model of leadership by examining core values from Social Change Model (SCM) of leadership on which the LID Model was framed.

Center for Leadership Development Program at Research Site University

The leadership program in this study is a four-year co-educational program that provides opportunities for students to learn how to be effective in leadership roles and processes. The leadership philosophy of this institution is that individuals need not be in formal positions to be considered leaders but to be in collaboration with people who work together to create positive change and that every act of leadership can affect individuals, teams, organizations, the community and society at large. The goal of this leadership program is to develop students' understanding of leadership in an attempt to create positive change for the common good.

Leadership, in this program, is defined as a process that by its very nature sets up a dynamic relationship between leaders and active followers. Students in this program learn that they are responsible for their actions and share responsibility for the actions of those they influence. This program not only educates students about concepts and theories to be used for leadership, it also provides students with learning experiences that

enable them to put theory into action for the benefit of their organizations, communities and society.

The leadership program has four phases, which are “Self,” “Collaboration,” “Change,” and “The Common Good,” with stated goals for each phase corresponding to each academic year in the program. During the “Self” phase, emerging leader students set and achieve personal goals, assess leadership styles, think critically and ethically, and strive for personal mastery. These students participate in six leadership workshops and in 20 hours of service, attend six programming events, join a campus organization, shadow two campus leaders, and attend a group session each semester with Phase III leaders. During the “Collaboration” phase, students are placed in partnerships and learn to appreciate diversity, seek first to understand, develop synergy within groups, build consensus and manage conflict, effectively influence others, and communicate effectively. They participate in a Leadership Laboratory project, hold a leadership role on campus, participate with faculty and staff in leadership discussions, attend a “How to Lead” retreat, attend six leadership workshops and a teamwork seminar. During the “Change” phase, students experience how to understand the process of personal transition, set and achieve organizational goals, increase shared vision, develop personal and organizational flexibility, and address restraining forces that prevent change. They complete a personal and organization project of change, participate in four challenge workshops, attend two facilitation trainings, facilitate group conversations with Emerging Leaders, participate in two change seminars, and attend a leadership conference. During “The Common Good” phase, students examine their personal styles, further discuss

integrity, and transfer their leadership learning to the campus and the community. They attend a Phase IV retreat and monthly capstone discussions, complete a campus community climate project, coordinate the Phase II “How to Lead” retreat, attend leadership connection workshops and speaker sessions, and present his or her leadership legacy to a review board. There is a travel abroad component to Phase II for students in this program who are [Research Site Leadership Program Founder] Fellows.

Participants

This study employed purposive sampling; the participants in this study were six recent female graduates (Class of 2008) who participated for four years in the leadership program during their college career at this institution. I chose one institution in order to control for factors that may vary from institution to institution such as leadership programs with different structures or the different components of Experiential Learning. The Office of Student Leadership sent a pre-contact email to recent female graduates from the Class of 2008. I then made contact with the potential participants to ask them to participate in the study. This correspondence is included in Appendix A. Six participants were chosen from those recent female graduates who were either Fellows in the leadership program and participated in both curricular and co-curricular components of the four-year program or Non-Fellows and participated only in the co-curricular component of the four-year program. I sought to learn from these women how they perceived their Experiential Learning and how they perceived their leadership identity upon graduation and ascertain if they felt any connection between the two. Because this university is engagement rich, I wanted to examine the impact of Experiential Learning

on leadership identity at this particular institution. In this study, I looked at the leadership program to determine the acquisition of leadership identity/efficacy based on the stages of Leadership Identity Development LID Model of leadership by examining core values from Social Change Model (SCM) of leadership on which LID Model was framed.

Haley

Haley is a 24-year-old, White female who double majored in Political Science and Public Administration and doubled minored in Leadership and International Studies during her undergraduate college career. She was a Fellow in the [Research Site Leadership Program]. She is currently attending law school student at Elon Law in Greensboro, NC. Haley is currently Chair of the Law Republicans in Law School, and next year she will be Managing Editor for the Law Review, which is a position directly under the Editor in Chief. She feels that her Undergraduate Leadership experience as VP of her sorority and the Marketing Director for the [Research Site Leadership Program] helped her to be the Managing Editor for the Law Review. Haley's Undergraduate Leadership positions in the DDD sorority and in the College Republicans were the most impacting Experiential Learning experiences with regard to her perception of her leadership identity today.

Kaylin

Kaylin is a 24 year old, Black female who double majored in Biology Pre-Med and Philosophy. She went on to earn a graduate degree at the Monterey Institute in California majoring in International Management. She has been accepted and is now

trying to secure finances to attend Bocconi, a well known business school in Europe, for studies in International Health Management with Economic Policy. She is a leader today in a freelance writing project where she is obtaining a personal perspective on aging women and on socioeconomic and health aspects during their experiences. She also has self-employment ventures where she is providing research consulting services. Kaylin claims the combination of the leadership program and her international Internship put her in the direction where she is today.

Jillian

Jillian is a 24-year-old White female who was an International Studies major with minors in Leadership, Spanish, History, Political Science, and Latin American Studies. Jillian is a servant leader today. She started working for Equip, an international training company for Christian leaders, right after college graduation. She works with international teams planning conferences around the world, teaching leadership to men and women, and working on projects with Christian leaders in the country by helping them develop financial presence. Her self-identity, confidence, ability to take initiative, challenge process, and work as a team, and realization of the importance of adding value to individuals and to the team from her undergraduate education have helped her with this journey. She now works with the Vertical Horizons Group, a non-profit ministry, helping with leadership, change, and growth. She is currently working in Lebanon for a two-month period. Her supervisor is very supportive in her leadership development, helping her grow through reading and discussing books to build on her strengths and crystallize her leadership capabilities. Her most significant college experience was her

Undergraduate Leadership in Campus Outreach followed by her Internships in Study Abroad.

Grace

Grace is a 24-year-old, White female who majored in Leisure Sports Medicine. She recently graduated from University of Georgia with a Master's Degree and hopes to work in a Residence Life Office in a college or university setting. She was a leader in graduate school in her cohort and in her residence hall through mentoring and ensuring people's thoughts were heard. She was also a leader on the board of South Atlantic Affiliate of College and Universities Residence Halls (SAACURH) at a regional level, where RSAs from different school congregate for conferences. She plans to be a leader when she returns to the professional world. Her most impacting college experience was her Undergraduate Leadership in RSA.

Alyssa

Alyssa is a 24-year-old, Black and Costa-Rican female who majored in Political Science and double minored in Human Services and Leadership. She had always wanted to go to law school but, after going through the leadership with her mentoring young students in the community and her Internship, she knew she wanted to be a Public Defender and not just a 'lawyer who nailed the guilty guys.' She wants to continue her youth mentoring and help people make the right decisions and make her community a better place. Alyssa took a year off after college to work at City Year in Washington, DC, where she participated in about 1,700 hours of Community Service during her 10 months with this organization. She is now in graduate school to obtain an MA in Public

Administration and American Government with a Certificate in Law and Public Policy; she will graduate in May 2011.

Taylor

Taylor is a 24-year-old, White female who majored in Exercise Sport Science. Taylor is currently in graduate school for Physical Therapy in Miami, FL, and she is currently the liaison between The Duke Children's Miracle Network and other colleges and universities. She is still involved in leadership today. Her Physical Therapy school raises money for scholarships and grants for research; she was the leader for her group in the Miami Market Challenge, and her class won. She has been in graduate school for two years, is about to start her clinicals, and is very eager to get out in the field and start working. She is in class from 9am-5pm everyday as opposed to having just a few hours of class per day like in undergraduate education so she does not have the time or energy for service. She is looking forward to travel and service soon. She and her mother are planning to go to China and work in an orphanage next year when she graduates. Haley acquired this desire through her work in Study Abroad, Internships, Undergraduate Leadership, and Volunteer Service.

Role of the Researcher

I am very passionate about Experiential Learning and hold the assumption that Experiential Learning is crucial for positive leadership development. I am very interested in how Experiential Learning enhances the leadership identity development process. My institution is very engagement-rich; we intentionally track and measure students' participation in Experiential Learning. I, as a staff member in the Technology division,

wrote the system that tracks and reports those numbers so I have seen the tremendous growth over the years in these learning styles in college education. I present on this topic at the regional and national level at software conferences and have had much inquiry as to how we track this. During the data collection and analysis for this study, I was very conscious of remaining very open to any findings that I received without bringing this bias.

Because I am conducting “backyard” research (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992) at the university where I am employed, I was able to gain easy access to these recent female alumni who participated in the four-year program due to my position on the staff and my relationship with the administrators in the Student Life division.

Methods of Data Collection

Data collection strategies for this study were comprised of document collection, consisting of papers the female graduate participants submitted during each year of the four-year leadership development program, as well as personal semi-structured interviews with these recent female graduate participants. The purpose of interviews was to

. . . find out from them things we cannot observe...feelings, thoughts, and intentions . . . behaviors that took place at some previous point in time...situations that preclude the presence of an observer . . . how people organized the world and the meanings they attach to what goes on in the world—we ask people questions about those things. (Patton, 1990, p. 278)

Stake (1995) stated that case study research allows qualitative researchers to take pride in discovering and portraying the multiple views of the case and added “the

interview is the main road to multiple realities” (p. 64). Table 1 presents my research matrix, which displays how my research questions correlated with the data sources and analysis that were used for this study.

Table 1

Research Question Matrix and Data Sources/Analysis

Research Questions	Data Sources		Analysis
	Interview	Documents	
How do recent female college graduates perceive their own leadership identity?	X	X	Coding/Themes Leadership Year-End Documents
How do recent female college graduates describe their participation in Experiential Learning during college?	X	X	Coding/Themes Experiential Learning
When considering the acquisition of and growth in leadership identity, what undergraduate themes are meaningful for recent female college students?	X	X	Coding/Themes Relationships—Experiential Learning and Leadership

In this study, I sought to understand the participants’ meanings with regard to the acquisition of their leadership identity/efficacy gained in the [Research Site Leadership Program] based on the stages of LID Model of leadership. By using female college graduates, I was able to look into topics that Komives et al. (2006) indicated further research was needed such as determining how post-college adults experience the “Integration/Synthesis” stage and determining whether there are additional stages not listed in the existing theory.

Documents

The participants were required to write and submit a paper at the end of each of the four academic years in the [Research Site Leadership Program] to demonstrate their personal concepts of leadership and their growth in the leadership area. I collected a folder for each participant in the study with these legacy papers which cover reflection on each of the four phases, “Self,” “Collaboration,” “Change,” and “The Common Good,” one phase for each year in the program. The outline for requested information to be included in the four year-end papers is shown in Appendix B.

Interviews

Using a semi-structured interview format allowed for questions to be asked in the same order or in a slightly different order for the interviews that moved in other, valuable directions. It allowed the opportunity for follow-up questions to be asked if necessary for clarification (Merriam, 1998). The interview protocol with the questions and issues to be explored is shown in Appendix C. I collected and read the documents for each student before the interview in order to have in mind what I might need clarification or more information on. Three of the interviews were conducted and recorded through Skype which enabled me to see the participant’s facial expressions and non-verbal language whereas phone interviews do not allow that visual aspect; the other three were conducted by phone and recorded by a handheld audio recording device. Each interview, which lasted about one hour and fifteen minutes on average, was transcribed by the researcher within the week of the interview. I incorporated member-checking to check the accuracy of my interpretation of the participants’ meanings to ensure the truth value of the data.

Each interview was recorded, transcribed, and coded as described in the analysis section below.

The interview questions were very timely, as Experiential Learning is a growing phenomenon currently, and the research methods permitted the research questions to be addressed. The interview was pilot tested with three female recent graduates from this institution in order to satisfy a class project and to help identify appropriate probes for the interviews. The actual changes that were made to the interview protocol from the pilot study involved removing the leadership questions in the original interview protocol that were answered in the year-end documents and changing the leadership outcomes gained through Experiential Learning to be more reflective of those in SCM in order to focus on how Experiential Learning aided in the outcomes.

Data Analysis

The analysis of the data began with a preliminary step of re-reading each of the four year documents and then listening to the audio taped interview to get a sense of the overarching ideas expressed by each participant; this happened with document data and interview data combined for each participant. After the interviews were transcribed, I then read through each entire transcript to search for examples of the ways the participants constructed meaning. I looked for themes in which to group the examples. The documents and interview transcripts were color-coded and placed into categories in order to show emerging themes with regard to graduate reports of leadership development during undergraduate Experiential Learning. My notes and ideas about how the data might relate to the study's purpose, research questions, literature review, and

method were made in the margins of the documents and transcripts (Spradley, 1979). I clustered data into groups by looking at things that are alike and things that do not belong by making notes in the margins of the informants' transcripts. I looked for plausibility in order to have conclusions that are reasonable and sensible. As new themes emerged, I reread all legacy papers and interview transcripts and examined them for instances of the newly emerging categories.

Data were analyzed using strategies suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994) which recommend putting all data, consisting of document and interview data in this study, into text and creating contact summary sheets. I chunked the data into two parts, leadership identity with examples and experiences and outcomes through Experiential Learning. I analyzed the leadership data from the documents using LID Model exploring certain stages of leadership students appeared to move through as they matriculated through the leadership program. The categories included Awareness, Exploration and Engagement, Leader Identified, Leadership Differentiated, Generativity, and Integration/Synthesis. I then analyzed the Experiential Learning data from the interview transcripts by capturing the outcomes the students felt they gained from their experiences in the different types of Experiential Learning. This analysis used the outcomes freely reported and the eight, a priori components of SCM as start list categories. I created Contact Summary Sheets or Document Summary Forms (Miles & Huberman, 1994) in the form of index cards with color-coding for categories of (a) Stages of LID Model and types of Experiential Learning that aided in movement, and (b) Leadership outcomes (self-reported and the eight components of SCM Model) and types of Experiential

Learning that aided in outcomes. Finally, after analyzing the two separate chunks of data, I looked at the relationship between the levels of Experiential Learning and leadership identity. I was able to establish connections from both the data level and from the coding level.

The first level of analysis consisted of understanding the individual experiences and then condensing informant responses into key quotes or phrases that conveyed the essence of their experiences. I noted quotes that I felt expressed the participants' meaning of their Experiential Learning that were rich in supporting each of the themes in the study. This level looked for cultural meanings that involve "patterns of behavior, artifacts, and knowledge that people have learned or created" (p. 86). This level explored the participants' understanding of leadership before the program and after the program, the leadership shown to them or they displayed through Experiential Learning, and the growth during the leadership development program toward their leadership identity. The second level of analysis involved a search for relationships among Experiential Learning and leadership identity using self-reported outcomes and components of SCM. Analysis at this level examined the types of Experiential Learning they participated in and the outcomes they gained such as Change, Consciousness of Self, Congruence, Commitment, Collaboration, Common Purpose, Controversy with Civility, and Citizenship. In this level of analysis, I examined the participants' sense of relationships between their Experiential Learning and their perceptions of leader as authoritative figure versus group leadership, leadership learned in the leadership program as a whole versus leadership

learned through Experiential Learning, and seeing others as leader versus seeing themselves as leader. Specific findings will be discussed in Chapter IV.

To address the first research question, “How do recent female college graduates perceive their own leadership identity?”, I analyzed the documents to see how the female graduates defined what leadership meant to them at the beginning and at the end of the program, how they moved through the LID Model, and how they have seen themselves grow in leadership capacity in order to determine their leadership identity upon graduation. I wanted to learn what brought them to that place of growth, how they learned leadership, gained leadership identity, and what challenged or developed them. I examined the stages of the LID Model the students were in during each academic year through the documents.

The data collected through interviews included responses about participation in Experiential Learning in the leadership program during the four-year college career. These interview questions answered the research questions (a) “How do recent female college graduates describe their participation in Experiential Learning during college?”, and (b) “When considering the acquisition of and growth in leadership identity, what undergraduate experiences are meaningful for female college graduates?” From the interviews, I took a close look at each of the seven “C”s in SCM since this institution frames its program on SCM. I had probes for each of the seven values of SCM plus Change (including Citizenship, Collaboration, Commitment, Common Purpose, Congruence, Consciousness of Self, and Controversy with Civility) to see how strong the outcomes were and to learn if Experiential Learning had strong influence on the

outcomes leading to leadership identity. Though I used these presumed categories, other themes emerged. In the end, I wanted the participants to discuss the experiences that really enabled them with leadership capacities and abilities and efficacy and, hopefully, leadership practice in the future if not already.

To address the second research question, “How do recent female college graduates describe their participation in Experiential Learning during college?”, I asked participants to tell me about their Experiential Learning at their undergraduate university by discussing the types and frequencies of the different types of Experiential Learning that they took part in. I had them discuss their experiences in the following: Service-Learning, Internships, Volunteer Service, Undergraduate Leadership, and Study Abroad. I asked the reasons they decided to participate in these experiences in the first place with probes of personal initial desire, influence by peers, class requirements, or other reasons. I inquired about leadership skills or concepts that were displayed or learned through any of the experiences. The big question in this interview is whether Experiential Learning contributed to their feeling of leadership at the end of the program, and if so, in what ways.

To address the third research question, “When considering the acquisition of and growth in leadership identity, what undergraduate experiences are meaningful for recent female college graduates?”, I used the documents and the interview transcripts. I explored what meaning the college graduates made from the participation in Experiential Learning and in the leadership program itself and assessed what components contributed to their leadership identity. The acquisition of leadership outcomes were assessed with

the source of the outcomes potentially being participation in the leadership program or in Experiential Learning.

Validity

Every step of my study was approached with the question in mind being, “What is going on here?” You demonstrate validity by showing that you collected your data in a thorough and authentic manner, were rigorous in your analysis, can explain alternative and competing meanings, and can show through steps of data transformation the path that you took to develop your knowledge statement or findings (Worthen & McNeil, 2002, p. 141).

The threats to internal validity, according to Denzin’s (1989) approach, are historical events occurring between measurements, subject maturation between measurements, the effect of subject selection on results, interaction of maturation and selection effects on results, loss of subjects, testing effects, and changes in instrumentation (Eisenhart & Howe, 1992). I did not see any of these being an issue in my study as the participants were right out of college with no exceptional maturation occurring during that time period and no historical events occurring. I did not foresee the bad economic time in our country as a threat to validity, but realized there would be a slight possibility that the participants may not feel as strongly about their leadership identity if they could not find jobs after graduation. I stayed true to my protocol and did not make any changes in instrumentation once the interviews had started.

A potential threat to validity of this study was researcher bias. I hold the belief that Experiential Learning is crucial for positive leadership development; I am very

passionate about Experiential Learning and I knew I would bring this assumption to the table. I remained very open to any findings that I received without bringing this bias with me. I ensured that I took the data from this study in a very neutral context instead of skewing it to align with positive connections between Experiential Learning and leadership identity if that was not the case. With my inside knowledge of Experiential Learning offerings at this institution and my personal passion for this type of learning, I had to remain very careful not to filter what my participants were saying. I needed to accurately hear what they were saying in order to minimize this threat. Triangulation resulted from the use of multiple data collection methods including interview and document collection. The four types of triangulation used in qualitative research are: (a) data triangulation, (b) researcher triangulation, (c) theory triangulation, and (d) methodological triangulation (Yin, 1994). I use data triangulation with the interviews and document collection along with theory triangulation consisting of the theoretical scheme of LID, SCM, and ELT in the interpretation of the phenomenon.

A threat to the internal validity of this study could have been present in the students' responses during interviews since I am an administrator at this institution, although all participants were informed of the purpose of the study. The potential threat was that the alumni may have given answers to interview questions that represent what these alumni might think I wanted to hear since I am currently on the staff versus the true answer that they would have given to an outsider. I minimized this threat by building rapport with the participants from the time I set up the interviews until the moment the interviews were completed. I believe that I have a good personality for building good

rapport with people during initial contact by exuding trustworthiness and warmth. Beginning with the initial contact, I made sure the participants knew that I was performing this interview to add data to my personal study as an independent research student at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro and not as an administrator at their undergraduate university and that I really just wanted their true feelings and opinions. I also used member checking and included data triangulation, which are basic strategies to ensure internal validity (Merriam, 1998).

As for external validity, the threats are differences in likely response to testing and treatment, testing effects, multiple treatment interference, and subject selection effects on applications (Eisenhart & Howe, 1992). These threats were not problematic for my study. Generalizability is not of great importance in this study but the findings will be of great interest to administrators of private institutions. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), "Potential audiences for research findings must themselves determine whether the context in which they are interested is sufficiently similar to the context from which the research findings derive to make their transfer possible and reasonable" (Eisenhart & Howe, 1992, p. 652).

Ethical Considerations

The ethics of research is concerned with the research study being harmful to the participants (Maxwell, 2005). The only ethical consideration that I see in this study could have been interviewing alumni from this university, again because of my employment there. This could have personal or social implications such as the interviewer, as an administrator of their college, eliciting, knowing, and using the knowledge obtained from

the participants. This could have made some of the alumni participants skeptical that I was asking questions as a university administrator rather than as an independent researcher; this could have caused participants to hold back true feelings and opinions, and may even have caused them to wonder if I am planning to use the data they share with me at their university. These alumni could have also felt that my connection with the institution gives me inside knowledge and that I could sway their answers. However, I did not sense this to be the case in any of my interviews. I needed to be sure to get accurate reflections of what their college education meant to them with respect to Experiential Learning and leadership development. I used the connection as a good thing rather than a problem in that it gave me additional context to gain a good rapport with them. For example, in one pilot phone interview, the train passed through, and it gave the participant a good warm feeling of a great memory from her college days. She commented that it reminded her of every morning that she awoke at her Oak Hill apartment during her college years.

I was not at risk for major ethical issues such as threatening one's privacy or disrupting one's peace of mind. The results from this study far outweighed any potential risks. I did fulfill my obligation to inform the participants of what the study was about before they were interviewed and what the likely outcomes would be (Eisenhart & Howe, 1992). I also disclosed my purpose for the study to the participants and that I would reflect their meanings and realities in good faith.

Summary

Beginning with a discussion of qualitative research, this chapter included a description and rationale for the methodology that was employed in this study. A reflection of my role as a researcher was included to remind myself and inform others of the ways that my personal passion is intertwined with my subject. The selection process, site, and the four-year leadership program used in the case study were disclosed. I included specific information with regard to data collection and analysis, validity and ethical considerations.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to gain a clearer understanding of how Experiential Learning facilitates leadership identity among female college students. Previous research focused on the leadership development of White males primarily, without examining the Experiential Learning component of a college education with regard to leadership outcomes. Also, most studies on leadership in higher education use a quantitative approach with leadership survey instruments. In order to address these shortcomings, I sought to uncover women's perceptions of their own leadership identity and of leadership outcomes gained through their Experiential Learning during college. Data for this study were triangulated using the participants' four year-end legacy papers, which they wrote during their college years, and the material I obtained through interviews. The findings for this study will be presented by answering each research question directly. The research questions used for this study are as follows:

1. How do recent female college graduates perceive their own leadership identity?
2. How do recent female college graduates describe their participation in Experiential Learning during college?

3. When considering the acquisition of and growth in leadership identity, what undergraduate experiences are meaningful for recent female college graduates?

This chapter will conclude with two surprise findings.

Research Question 1

How do recent female college graduates perceive their own leadership identity?

To answer this research question, I present the data in four sections. I first present data that emerged during an initial analysis to identify each participant's philosophy on leadership before and after the collegiate leadership program. The second section presents data to show students' movement through the different phases of the LID and what influence their Experiential Learning might have had on that leadership identity development. The third and fourth sections present the individual reports of the growth moments in students' leadership and the students' understandings of leadership over the four years in their college careers respectively. The findings from this research question show changes in their understanding over time and document their journey toward identifying as confident, experienced leaders. Data were triangulated from the participants' four year legacy papers and their interviews.

Perception of Leadership Identity

I analyzed the data from the four year-end documents and from the interviews for each participant's philosophy on leadership before entering college and the [Research Site Leadership Program] and after completing the program and their college career. Before the leadership program, participants' philosophy of leadership could be

summarized as “leaders boss people around.” The participants viewed a leader as one in a central, authoritative position. The common themes for “philosophy on leadership after the leadership program” include “group, relationship oriented leadership through collaboration, empowering others, and service with a shared leadership approach.” These themes were unanimous with the exception of one participant who, before college, had thoughts that leadership was handed down through family name in her hometown.

Before the leadership program—(“leaders boss people around”). Before entering the leadership program, participants had a very positional and authority-centered view of leadership. For example, when asked her thoughts on leadership philosophy before college, Haley replied:

Before college, I kind of thought that leaders told people what to do and bossed people around, that kind of thing. I didn’t realize the personal aspects of it and how much thought goes into being an effective leader. (Haley, Interview)

Similarly, in her interview, Kaylin described her philosophy on leadership before college as “more like you listen to me and I tell you what to do and you do it.” Grace described her idea of a leader as being someone who “was always front and center.”

Alyssa thought of leadership in a very political and individual manner before college. She comes from a very small town where everyone’s grandparents went to the same school and married each other and where your name is what carries you a long way. She believed that “it doesn’t necessarily have to do with what you know but it has to do with who you know.”

In Taylor's sophomore legacy paper, she described her freshman leadership philosophy this way: "I used to look at leadership as directing people and assigning them."

After the leadership program—("get people empowered"). After completing the leadership program, participants expressed their understanding of leadership as being relational and shared.

Leaders are part of a group and they are sometimes the people that stand out in front and sometimes the people who stand quietly in the back and push people towards a certain direction, and you have to put time into getting to know the people that you are leading in order to be an effective leader instead of just bossing them around. (Haley, Interview)

So now my idea of leadership is to get people empowered, get people to think for themselves, ask the right questions that lead to a better answer that they have produced, and so that at the end of the day they feel as if they did it themselves and they are better. I guess being a contributing citizen or contributing in another group to become involved, behind the scenes, while also evolving personally. I guess my idea of leadership now is self-development and self-improvement. (Kaylin, Interview)

A leader to me was someone who was going to help the group get all goals together, figure out what the big picture was going to be, look at the finished project. A good leader would help the group move towards that, whether the leader was someone you saw and heard a lot or was more quiet but was still there to help the team reach the goal. (Grace, Interview)

Now I see it as being more of a team than a dictatorship. I think a leader should always put the needs of the group before their own in order to be effective. (Taylor, Sophomore Legacy Paper)

Movement through the Leadership Identity Model Stages

The LID model includes six phases, which are "Awareness," "Exploration/Engagement," "Leader Identified," "Leadership Differentiated," "Generativity," and

“Integration/Synthesis.” Komives et al. (2006) found that students move through this model while developing leadership identity. When looking at the four year-end documents for each participant, I looked for movement through the six phases of the Leadership Identity Model (LID) (see Table 2). I examined the students’ reflection papers at the end of their freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior years to see which phases they were moving through during each academic year and to try to ascertain if the Experiential Learning helped them reach new stages of leadership identity. Movement from Stage 3 to Stage 4 is the stage that we know the least about therefore I wanted to see if the Experiential Learning made a contribution to this movement (Komives et al., 2006). The following table shows their movement through the LID model and the types of experiences that helped them move through the various stages of the LID model.

Stage 1—Awareness (“leadership is happening out there somewhere”). Stage one in LID is “Awareness” where students begin recognizing that leadership is happening out there somewhere and they learn to verbalize making a difference and accomplishing goals. The participants in this study were in this stage during their freshman year when they observed and shadowed other students in the leadership program and started joining clubs and organizations and observed how they were governed and how meetings were run.

When I shadowed a leader, it gave me a glimpse at a position I might want to hold in the future. In watching those in leadership positions at the beginning of the year, I learned how frustrating disorganization was to those who are following. I also learned how dedication and passion can really ignite members of a group to be more involved. I was also encouraged with the confidence of my fellow emerging leaders, to run for and win an officer position with the group. (Haley, Freshman Legacy Paper)

Table 2***LID Model Movement***

Subject	Freshman Year	Sophomore Year	Junior Year	Senior Year
Haley	Stage 1 – Shadowing student Stage 2 – Joined DDD, College Republicans, and worked for St. Jude’s Hospital Stage 3 – Admin Director in College Republicans	Stage 3 – NC State Secretary in College Republicans, Reference Chair – DDD Stage 4 – Reference Chair – DDD and Volunteer Shoe Drive	Stage 3 – Reference Chair – DDD – Fall Semester VP – DDD – Spring Semester Marketing Director – Lead Program Stage 4 – Reference Chair – DDD Stage 5 – Role model to other students Stage 6 – Lessons learned will Help transition into life after college	Stage 3 – VP – DDD Phase IV Coordinator of Leadership Program Stage 4 – Internship/Common Good Proj Tree City Stage 6 – Mentioned uncertainty for life after college
Kaylin	Stage 1 – Shadowing student Stage 2 – Joined Intervarsity, Lincoln Pre-Med Society, Beta Biology Honor Society, Biology Club	Stage 3 – RSA leadership Stage 4 – Observing club leadership Stage 5 – Mentor other students Stage 6 – necessity of skills to function in workplace	Stage 3 – Leader in Lead Lab in Leadership Program Stage 5 – Consultant and conference organizer Stage 6 – Future civic leader	Stage 5 – Website consulting
Jillian	Stage 1 – Shadowing student Stage 2 – Volunteer service – Mis Amigos, Hunger and Aids Awareness, joined Campus Outreach	Stage 3 – Event Coordinator in Leadership Program Stage 4 – Leader/Follower Workshop Stage 5 – Internship, Oakes Camp England Stage 6 – Experiences were hard but will help in future roles – Oakes Internship	Stage 3 – College Republicans Leadership Stage 4 – Leader/Follower Workshop Stage 5 – Internship, Oakes Camp England	Stage 5 – Directed leaders Stage 6 – can reflect on past experiences in college in future and learn from mistakes

Table 2—Continued

Subject	Freshman Year	Sophomore Year	Junior Year	Senior Year
Grace	Stage 1 – Shadowing student Stage 2 – Volunteer Service Blood Drives – Joined RSA	Stage 3 – EV Coordinator and RSA Program Chair Stage 4 – RSA leadership roles Stage 5 – RSA improved communication problem Stage 6 – skills to use in real life	Stage 3 – RSA President with distant lead role – Area Councils Stage 5 – helped in other organizations Stage 6 – RSA will help to work with others in future	Stage 3 – RSA President with distant lead role - Area Councils Stage 5 – RSA Leadership Transition Stage 6 – looking to leave legacies at other institutions in future and continual change – Always grow as leader
Alyssa	Stage 1 – Shadowing Student Stage 2 – Joined Black Cultural Society, NC Student Legislature, and Multi- Cultural Society	Stage 3 – Secretary of College Ministry at Local Church Stage 4 – Secretary of College Ministry	Stage 3 – SMART mentoring Stage 4 – SMART mentoring Stage 5 – SMART Community Youth	Stage 3 – SUMMIT leadership Stage 4 – SUMMIT leadership Stage 5 – SMART Community Youth Stage 6 – prepared for leadership positions in future
Taylor	Stage 1 – Observing students in Lead Program Stage 2 – Joined DanceMarathon, Club Frisbee, Applying for leadership positions Stage 5 – Sense of Self And wanted to impact Her school as it had impacted her	Stage 3 – DanceMarathon - Executive Board Entertainment Chair Stage 4 – DanceMarathon Team projects	Stage 3 – DanceMarathon Director Stage 4 – DanceMarathon team projects Stage 5 – OL and Univ 101 TA	Stage 3 – DanceMarathon Director Stage 6 - Missing her Year 4 document – Her Stage 6 thinking must have occurred in senior year

Taylor observed different leadership styles by observing students in the leadership program. In her freshman year paper, she wrote, “This year I have really discovered that leadership between different people varied wildly.”

Stage 2—Exploration/engagement (“looking for leadership opportunities”).

Stage two is “Exploration/Engagement” where students begin interacting with peers by exploring opportunities in group setting thus building self-confidence and self-efficacy. This is when students join organizations and observe their leaders without formally becoming leaders themselves. The participants in this study moved into Stage 2 when they started participating in service and when they joined clubs and organizations and started applying for and experimenting with leadership roles. Stage 2 occurred in the freshman year for each of these participants.

These organizations tie into leadership, because when I attend these meetings, they are primarily run by the students. I am able to see how the organization is run and if it is run effectively. From these observations, I receive a visual idea of leadership in action and I learn the various leadership skills. (Haley, Freshman Legacy Paper)

Stage 3—Leader identified (“leader-centric; positional leader”). Stage three is “Leader Identified” and occurs when students hold leader-centric views and believe that one person can be the positional leader. Students here realize they can become leaders through positions they take and may connect to mentors or find organizations to fit their values and interests in this stage. The participants in this study moved into Stage 3 when they hold leadership positions or are leaders among peers in service and in Study Abroad. Whereas some participants (Haley, Kaylin) moved into Stage 3 as early as their

freshman year, others did not enter Stage 3 until sophomore year (Jillian, Grace, Alyssa, and Taylor).

By taking on a leadership position, I was learning about my personal leadership style. I was able to experiment with different things and watch the results.
(Jillian, Sophomore Legacy Paper)

Stage 4—Leadership differentiated (“non-positional leader”). Stage four is “Leadership Differentiated” and is where students begin to view leadership being exhibited by non-positional group members rather than merely by the positional leader. This is the stage in which students learn teamwork skills and communication skills such as listening and empathy, build group community, and handle group conflict. Participants in this study moved into Stage 4 when they saw leadership as non-positional.

Haley experienced this (sophomore and junior years) in her Undergraduate Leadership position in her sorority, Delta Delta Delta, when she realized the importance of followers. In her sophomore year, she wrote:

But learning to follow is actually one of the most important things a leader can do because it not only lets other ideas come to the surface, but it also allows leaders realize what it is like to be a follower and how they can improve their leadership in the eyes of a follower. (Haley, Sophomore Legacy Paper)

When asked during her interview what she meant by her leadership philosophy including both leaders and followers in her legacy paper, she said:

Well I think that a lot of what you work on sophomore and junior year is kind of going beyond yourself and realizing there are other people involved in the leadership process, and I think becoming aware of that, you always know there

are followers, but becoming aware of that and having it enter my thought process is probably what I was referring to. (Haley, Interview)

In her senior year paper, she noted:

Even though this was really hard for me, I was glad that I had learned the skills I needed to recognize when it was time to be a follower and how to deal with the situation without creating an enemy that I would regret later on. (Haley, Senior Legacy Paper)

Kaylin showed signs of Stage 4 as early as her freshman and sophomore years where she saw shared leadership through observing how members of organizations assist the leader in all of her volunteer work. She stated that on two separate instances in her freshman year-end paper: “I learned that everyone can be a leader, even in the smallest way” and:

From my experience as an Emerging Leader, I have learned that the members of organizations assist the leader in benefitting the entire organization. I realized that each member is a leader too. (Kaylin, Freshman Legacy Paper)

During Kaylin’s sophomore year, she said:

A leader understands the common goal being achieved and is willing to play the role necessary for achieving those goals. Therefore, by understanding how to follow, the leader becomes a mentor to inexperienced leaders, providing them the opportunity to develop their skills. Sometimes leading involves being able to follow directions. So, in essence, the idea of leadership is understood in correlation with ‘followership.’ (Kaylin, Sophomore Legacy Paper)

Jillian saw leadership as non-positional in her sophomore year. She expressed:

Many people see leadership as a position or title; however, I see a leader as someone who others follow for positive or negative means. Knowing that I influence many people around me, I want to be a leader affecting positive change. In life I want to learn how to bring out the best in people and inspire others to make the most of their passions and abilities. (Jillian, Sophomore Legacy Paper)

In her Undergraduate Leadership role as President in RSA, Grace learned that all are leaders and followers at times and that sometimes one should lead and sometimes one should take the backseat and become a follower. During her sophomore year, Grace realized:

We are all leaders and we are all followers. It is not possible for everyone to be a leader at the same time so there are times when we must take the back seat and support the leader. Leaders and followers feed off of each other's strengths and they are both needed to reach the end goal. (Grace, Sophomore Legacy Paper)

I think like letting others, for me leadership is not only about being the person directing the group or helping the group along to wherever they are trying to go, but something about being a good leader is stepping back and letting others have that leadership experience too. I think that is one of the best educational methods, put someone else in the leadership position for a while, letting others step up and take that leadership role as well, I think is definitely important. (Grace, Interview)

Alyssa experienced this in her Undergraduate Leadership positions as Secretary of College Ministry and as Youth Mentor. Alyssa mentioned Stage 4 thinking as early as her freshman year when she felt:

Nothing can compare to actually joining the organization though, because the only difference between the top and bottom is the amount of planning and administrative work, but everyone's ideas are considered equally. (Alyssa, Freshman Legacy Paper)

During her interview two years after graduation, she said,

Even when you have a position like the Secretary of a group or a mentor, I feel like you are still part of a team, you know, even if you have a title, you're nothing without the people under you and around you. I try to look at myself as an equal even if I have more responsibility or ultimately I'm the one who is going to take the blame. I really try to look at myself as an equal and I don't like to say I'm the leader or I'm the one in charge because I think that takes away if you look at yourself in that manner. If you say, "Well I don't like it and I'm the one who can make the decisions," then that's not very healthy. (Alyssa, Interview)

Alyssa experienced this in her Undergraduate Leadership roles in her junior and senior years when she realized that much can be accomplished through empowering others and "speaking life into them."

Taylor experienced non-positional leadership during her sophomore year while working on teams for group projects when she realized that much can be accomplished through empowering others. She noted:

We all were leaders at times and followers at times and brainstormed to have some great ideas. (Taylor, Sophomore Legacy Paper)

In her junior year-end paper, she wrote of her experience in DanceMarathon leadership:

I decided I wanted to learn to delegate more responsibilities to other people and also give more weight to other people's positions so they could be empowered to make their role their own. (Taylor, Junior Legacy Paper)

Stage 5—Generativity ("making a contribution to the future"). Stage five is "Generativity" where students look beyond themselves and express a passion and commitment for the welfare of others such as peace, justice, and serving others. Students could learn to mentor new members, set up structures for mentoring, help other students

identify their personal passions and commitments, have other students examine their goals, and teach other students to see the perspectives of the groups they inhabit. The participants in this study were in Stage 5 when they acted as role models and mentors for younger students, worked with peer officers and leaders in other organizations, left documentation and policies for future leaders of clubs and organizations, and wanted to leave their mark on the institution which gave so much to them. Five of the six participants in this study discussed, in the legacy papers, the ways in which they were making a contribution to the future of their organizations and guiding other students in leadership.

Haley included others in the process of leading change in her sorority. During her junior year, she wrote:

I drew on past experience to show them how they could lead. I have really enjoyed being an older member of the program and serving as a role model for younger members of the program. (Haley, Junior Legacy Paper)

She made changes, took action, and talked to others about it; she wanted to develop fellow officers and did so through relationships.

For her junior year project, Kaylin wanted to implement the fundamental idea of helping others grow with a large scope of individuals. One way she has been influenced in developing her life and college skills is from the workshops she participated in and from her position as a Student Consultant and Conference Organizer.

I decided to revamp the Student Consulting towards providing leadership and development resources for the improvement of students' lives and not simply organizational institutions. I discovered that, when individuals are well prepared

to lead themselves, leading others becomes an extension of who they are and the task is simplified. (Kaylin, Junior Legacy Paper)

She created an interactive website to open Student Consulting to the rest of the campus community. She notes, in her senior year-end paper:

I have witnessed people connect on my account. People develop into passionate and humane leaders to replace my position, and I have grown as a result of witnessing the impact my passion made on their lives. (Kaylin, Senior Legacy Paper)

Jillian saw the need to facilitate the development of others as leaders as a senior by guiding and directing current leaders in other organizations. She worked on sustaining the Oaks organization by leaving good documentation packets at the end of her Internship, offering suggestions for the management group there from her observations, and setting a good example by working hard and with great integrity. She learned that different leadership styles are best for different groups and she wanted to strive to be a thriving team manager; she wanted to be a transformational leader motivating followers with vision and commitment. Likewise, she learned so much from this management team at the Oaks that will impact her character and choices for the rest of her life. During her senior year, she helped guide and direct the current leaders of organizations.

Grace definitely wanted to make a difference. In her sophomore year, she saw that communication was a problem in RSA and she improved that. She said:

This problem and the others that I faced throughout the year with the group have created a great learning process and I am taking all of those lessons with me as I go into my second term as President so I can help the next group of Executives. I am only the fourth president that the organization has had and I am the first to

have a two-term presidency so I think that my impact on the organization has been unique, just because of the short history of the organization. I think my biggest impact on the organization would simply be by making sure the organization continues to grow and flourish while keeping its mission in mind. (Grace, Sophomore Legacy Paper)

She also looked outside of this organization to make a difference. In her junior year-end paper she said:

And I can now use all of these skills in my other organizations and in real life. I can also pass these skills on. It was a great privilege for me to be shadowed and interviewed by a few of the members of Phase I and I was so glad to be able to pass on my knowledge and experience to them in hopes that they would be able to use those skills in their own lives. (Grace, Junior Legacy Paper)

In her senior year-end paper, she said:

As I look back on my four years at [her university] and the legacy I might leave, the first piece of my leadership experience and growth that comes to mind is my time spent with the RSA. It has also been interesting too through my own personal change as the year comes to a close because I am leaving behind a world that I have known for four years and an organization that I have helped build from the ground up. My personal focus this year has been to help others to be more aware of their different leadership qualities and how these qualities blend or conflict with other leadership qualities. I have been helping others find their leadership strengths and some of the challenge areas and then helping them try to work through those challenges. It has also been interesting as I have been helping the new Executive Board for RSA transition to work with those specific group dynamics. There are some challenges in the group leadership and I have been trying to help each member of the leadership group not only overcome these group dynamic challenges, but also help to see all of the different areas that can affect how well a team works together and to be more aware of the different influences on group dynamics. I have been able to utilize what I know about topics like communication and conflict, things I learned about through the [Research Site Leadership Program] to help them. (Grace, Senior Legacy Paper)

Alyssa never really tried to leave a legacy at her university. She never did anything with the thought in mind that she was doing it for people to remember her. In her interview, she humbly said, “I never did anything with the notion that one day I’m going to have my name on a building or that I was so great.” Her legacy is the students with whom she is still in contact and the ones who, although she is not still in touch with, allowed her to make an impact on their lives. Her legacy is the idea that some boys and girls in this world will make better decisions because of the mentoring that she did with them.

Taylor felt that she made a difference in other areas of leadership on campus. During her junior year as an Orientation Leader and a University 101 Teacher Assistant, she wrote:

These experiences always are just as beneficial to me as the new students because I think I learn from the Emerging Leaders and younger students just as much as they learn from me. It also makes me remember where I came from and why I chose the path I did in my college career. (Taylor, Junior Legacy Paper)

Stage 6—Integration/synthesis (“leading effectively with confidence”). Stage six is “Integration/Synthesis” where students view themselves as effective in working with others and build the confidence with the ability to do so in almost any context. In this stage, students should be able to identify their personal values about working with others in group settings as well as their talents and strengths they can bring to a group. Students should move into stage six as they end their college careers and transition from the educational context. Five out of six participants in this study mentioned that they began looking to Stage 6 early in their college careers. This peek at Stage 6 occurred as

they acquired leadership abilities and experiences and imagined how valuable these assets would be in their futures. Few studies have looked at leadership identity in post-graduates, but all of the women in this study have carried their leadership identity into the world past undergraduate college education into their graduate school programs and careers. They are all continuing in leadership and service (see Table 3).

Table 3

Participants' Leadership/Service Today—Two Years beyond Graduation

Participant	Current Profession	Current Leadership/Service
Haley	Law School—Elon, NC Managing Editor for the Law Review	Chair of Law Republicans
Kaylin	International Health –Monterey, CA	Freelance writing and research on Women's Health issues Seeking further education Int. Health—Bocconi Europe
Jillian	Non-Profit Ministry	Hearts of Lebanon—2 month service
Grace	Masters Degree—UGA May '10	Leader—on RSA at a Regional level Seeking Student Life Office position
Alyssa	MA—Public Admin, Law & Public Policy	Aspires to be a Public Defender Continues Youth Mentoring
Taylor	Physical Therapy—University of Miami	Duke Children's Hospital

Haley started looking toward this stage in her year-end junior year paper by saying:

The lessons I have learned this year will also, without a doubt, help me in the coming year with my common good project as well as my transition into life after college. (Haley, Junior Legacy Paper)

In her junior year-end paper, she mentioned uncertainty as far as life after college.

Studying abroad in London was a life changing experience and coming back to [her university] this fall was an enormous challenge both academically and socially. Not only did I have to rediscover my drive to succeed academically after living in a big city and working in a public affairs office every day, but I also had to deal with my uncertainty as far as life after [her university]; something that has never really been an issue for me. (Haley, Junior Legacy Paper)

Kaylin began looking toward Stage 6 during her sophomore year. In her sophomore year-end paper, she was discussing collaboration and group dynamics and showed Stage 6 thinking:

Later in life, the necessity of these skills becomes more evident, especially when functioning in the workplace. (Kaylin, Sophomore Legacy Paper)

In her junior year-end paper, she noted that Lao Tzu's quote on leadership manifested in her understanding of leadership as a student leader and as a "future civic leader" and that she believed the leadership program has served as a means to facilitate a rapid rate of development by drawing connections and promoting awareness of foundational skills and understanding in preparation for the real world.

Jillian started looking to leadership as a lifelong process in her sophomore year. She then wrote, “Though these experiences were hard, I know they will help me in future roles.” With regard to the Oaks Internship, she wrote:

I know without a doubt that these positions taught me so much about myself pertaining to different aspects of leadership. This is going to help me significantly as I continue with the leadership program and with my studies at [her university]. Above all though, I know that I have learned so much that will impact my character and choices for the rest of my life. (Jillian, Sophomore Legacy Paper)

As a senior, she conveyed:

At [her university], I led in an arena where it was okay to fail, get up and try again, but it seems that failing after [her university] will be more serious. I have realized though that after [her university] I will fail time and time again, as a friend, an employee, a daughter, a wife, a mother. The key is, not preventing failure, but rather learning from my mistakes and being resilient and persistent. It has taken time to reflect on these things in order to regain my confidence in leading others. Not only have I regained some of my confidence, but I have been reminded of the urgent need there is today for leaders with integrity and strong character. (Jillian, Senior Legacy Paper)

As a group we have touched the campus in so many ways which is a powerful thing to think about as the effects will be the same out in the world. I look forward to hearing what everyone is doing in 5, 10, and 20 years. As I get older and move out into the working world, somehow the responsibility leaders carry seems much heavier and more significant. (Jillian, Senior Legacy Paper)

During her interview, two years past graduation, she interjected thoughts on change and shared leadership:

I’ve been out of college for a couple of years now and I’ve experienced so much change already with jobs and especially professionally. The concepts of change, where we got a chance to put it into practice, and now being out in the working

world, I see that change is happening all the time and that is a huge thing to be able to personally implement it in organizations. (Jillian, Interview)

She also said, on shared leadership:

I would say that it solidifies more after college, because being out of college I was at the bottom of the totem pole and didn't feel like a leader anymore, because of knowing that I could because I have developed the self-confidence and know how to empower others. I know that my contribution does matter and I was put in an environment where I wanted to be a leader, but then at the same time, I'm really a follower because I'm not in charge. (Jillian, Interview)

Grace started looking toward Stage 6 in her sophomore year where she said, "And I can now use all of these skills in my other organizations and in real life." In her junior year, she noticed:

I now feel more prepared to help a group, whether that be the RSA Executives that I currently work with or a group that I will work with in the future, through a project of change. (Grace, Junior Legacy Paper)

In her senior year-end paper, she reflected:

As I look back on my four years in the program, I can now begin to define what my legacy at [her university] might look like and what legacies I want to leave at other institutions that I might be a part of. (Grace, Senior Legacy Paper)

In her interview, two years past graduation, she commented:

I think that it's about continual change, you know, you're never the same leader you were several years ago so think right now as a new professional ready to enter the world, I think I am ready in a good spot leadership wise, but I think that as I continue to move through the areas of student affairs that I will continue to find areas that I can work on and possibly change, and according to the skills for the position I aspire to. (Grace, Interview)

Alyssa discussed Stage 6 in her senior year paper:

Because of [Research Site Leadership Program] I do feel more prepared to deal with others as well as future leadership positions later in life. Having to deal with the same people for four years is similar to being in a company, where even if you do not work well with someone else you will still have to deal with them. For this reason, I feel better prepared. Also, I know how to better control or edit my mood and emotions when dealing with others in order to make the best of the situation. (Alyssa, Senior Legacy Paper)

Even though Taylor gained leadership confidence during her college years, she now feels that she is starting all over again at the bottom of the totem pole as a leader. She was the person that students approached for guidance and direction during her junior and senior years in college and now feels that she is not as experienced in her life after college and doesn't feel like the go-to experienced leader that she was during college. She is looking forward to finishing her graduate school program and clinical labs when she can begin work, travel, service, and leadership again.

Growth Moments in Leadership

The third part of the answer to research question one concerns what the participants felt helped them grow in their leadership during college. In this section I will outline the participants' growth moments in leadership.

These women had significant leadership growth in college both through successes and through failures (see Table 4). Five of the six participants reported that their memorable growth moment in leadership occurred when they held an Undergraduate Leadership position. One participant reported her growth moment in leadership to be when she was working on a senior project in Service. Four of the five who experienced

growth through holding a leadership position reported their growth to come during challenging conditions such as being left alone with no help, receiving constructive criticism from advisors or peers, and experiencing conflict with a follower in the group. The other participant described her growth moment to be when leading grew through a positive leadership position as VP of her sorority when other students looked to her as the “leadership dork.” The participant who experienced growth in leadership during her senior service project grew from the entire experience of making the service offered to students on campus happen.

Table 4

Participants’ Growth Moments in Leadership

Participant	Growth Moment in Leadership	Growth source
Haley	Undergraduate Leadership – VP DDD (Jr)	Working with 20 officers
Kaylin	Consulting Services Project (Sr)	Collaboration
Jillian	Undergraduate Leadership – Coordinator (Fr)	Left alone in position
Grace	Undergraduate Leadership – Pres of RSA (Jr)	Advisors Critical Feedback
Alyssa	Undergraduate Leadership - SMART Mentor (Jr)	Anonymous Peer Feedback
Taylor	Undergraduate Leadership – DanceMarathon Chair (So)	Conflict

Haley noticed a growth moment in leadership when she was in the VP role for her sorority because she was actually doing things that she had to get accomplished, was working with 20 officers, and was able to positively use what she had learned to actually get things done. She was excited while sharing her passion with the other women. During her interview, she chuckled as she told me that the sorority women had called her the “leadership dork.”

Kaylin noticed a growth moment during her legacy project in her senior year when she did the consulting services project to provide leadership and development resources for students. This experience was definitely a turning point for her because of the complexity; she had to create the program from an idea in her head, ensure resources, look at other conferences as models, tailor the website to meet specific needs, create the curriculum, market it, and ensure high attendance. She did this project in collaboration with another leader in the leadership program.

Jillian reported a growth moment in leadership sometime between the end of her freshman year and the beginning of her sophomore year when she did not get a co-coordinator assigned to help her in her Event Coordinator role in the [Research Site Leadership Program]. She felt very alone and unsure about what to do, so she decided to take the initiative to go for it all by herself rather than to sit back and wait. This was a little scary as she had only been in college for one year, but she stepped up to the plate and learned much from the situation.

Grace discussed a growth moment in leadership during her junior year, which was her second year as president of RSA. She was approached by the advisors during the

group's annual retreat to let her know what she was doing wrong. She thought at the moment this to be a confrontational session as she could not tell if the advisors were just venting but then accepted it as a good experience as she learned things that she could change or improve upon to be the President they wanted. These mentors used this opportunity to help her reflect upon her experiences and growth in leadership.

Alyssa felt that her leadership growth moment was when she realized that she was a leader both "off and on the clock." She reflected back to a time when someone wrote, "Would the leader of an organization say this about someone else?" on her Facebook Honesty Box. Alyssa then learned that what you do off the clock and what you do behind closed doors can affect everything you do, and that who you surround yourself with is very important, and to always be careful what you say and do because you're never off the clock. Just having some anonymous person point this out to her really helped her to grow in leadership.

Taylor remembered a growth moment in leadership when she was in conflict with a young woman on a committee while serving as Executive Chair for DanceMarathon. When this issue finally came to Taylor's attention, she didn't know how to handle the situation. She agreed to find the best way to work it out instead of just playing the card of "this is how it is and I'm the leader." Taylor was very proud of how she handled this incident and says she learned more from the tough times.

View Changed over 4 Years

The themes for how the women's view of leadership changed over the four years are: Single Positional Power Leadership to Shared Leadership, Formal to Informal

Leadership, General to Relational Leadership, and Servant Leadership. All six participants shared these views as well as the feeling of growth from being inexperienced freshmen to confident leaders as seniors and graduates (see Table 5).

Table 5

How Participants' Views of Leadership Changed Over Four Years in College

View of Leadership Changed over Four Years in College		
Participant	From	To
Haley	Boss people around	Shared Leadership
Kaylin	Boss people around	Formal to Informal, General to Relational
Jillian	Top-Down	Servant
Grace	Inexperienced	Sharing and Mentoring
Alyssa	Political-given/not earned or learned	Part of a team; empowering others
Taylor	Inexperienced—too much breadth	Narrow down for effectiveness; confident

Single positional power leadership to shared leadership. Haley's leadership philosophy in her junior year was to see things that could be improved and gain the support of peers to help them with these improvements with a common purpose for both leaders and followers to be moving forward and affecting positive change. Her philosophy in her senior year was more "group" oriented and more "relationship"

oriented than a one-way leader to follower relationship. She also recognized there are a variety of styles of leadership and different situations require different forms of leadership. She reemphasized her change in thinking during her interview:

I kind of thought leaders bossed people around and told them what to do, whereas out of the experiences that I did in college and a lot the leadership program gave us, we kind of learned that leaders are there to guide people and to bring people together instead of me taking everything because that never really works in the end. (Haley, Interview)

Grace also expressed how her view had changed from thinking of a leader as a central, authoritative person to that of a more shared effort:

When I came into the [Research Site Leadership Program], I thought the leader was someone who was always at the front of the group, the person that is always visible and vocal and making all of the decisions. Now I know that a leader does not have to be the outspoken, visible person. A leader can also be one of the quieter members in the group. A leader can lead by example and those examples do not always need to be the most visible. Sometimes the smaller examples can be just as powerful. A leader needs to inspire others to find their own passions and callings. A leader needs to be a resource and a person that can help others learn and develop their own leadership styles. (Grace, Senior Legacy Paper)

Jillian learned that a more collaborative, shared style of leadership and adding value to others is a good model of leadership that she saw as being very effective. She was this in Campus Outreach and then again in the Oaks camp in England. In her junior legacy paper, she said, “I believe there is so much power in leading people through empowering them.”

Formal to informal leadership. Kaylin thought of leadership as being in a formal position; as she shadowed a third year student during her freshman year, she

noticed that the leader she observed was leading in an informal way. She then continued to develop while allowing her own personality to play a role in her leadership. She learned that she could show her qualities of being very genuine and honest while leading.

Alyssa's personal philosophy on leadership when she graduated was of a more informal role:

My personal leadership philosophy is that you can observe the world around you but you must process it internally to interpret it for yourself. A leader isn't necessarily the one with the loudest voice or the most followers, but to me, a leader is someone who sticks to their convictions and allows their convictions to mature them, and life a fine sculpture, becomes chiseled into a masterpiece.
(Alyssa, Senior Legacy Paper)

General to relational leadership, and servant leadership. Kaylin changed her thinking on leadership from being general to more individual or relational through encountering each person as an individual person and seeing how they interacted with other people. She learned that it is best to be subtle and relational because you can make greater progress when you relate to people first because they are more familiar, trust you more, and are more willing to listen to you. She also learned that you should share the plan with people because when people understand the logic of why you are doing something, they tend to be more understanding. She said:

Even if they don't like it, they are more willing to listen but if you just tell people to do something just because, then you leave it to chance rather than creating a standardized strategy with which to create an efficient system, organization, etc.
(Kaylin, Interview)

Kaylin's views on herself as a leader changed tremendously over the four years:

My freshman year of college I entered the leadership arena as a self-proclaimed veteran of organizational leadership with experience as an SGA VP, Chemistry Club VP, and a President of a variety of other organizations. What I soon came to realize, was that it is not the number of offices one holds, nor the number of people under one's control; leadership is not about hierarchy or quantity, it is about the quality of relation and the efficient, humane use of time. It is about the simultaneous evolution of the organization and the people that comprise it. My leadership style emphasizes quality over quantity, people's needs first always, motivation and delegation through empowerment, and maintaining productive relationships between self, group members, and the audiences being catered to. (Kaylin, Senior Legacy Paper)

Jillian's view of herself as a leader changed during her college years from seeing leadership as top-down to that of being a servant leader with a desire to empower others and improve others. She said:

I knew I had some natural tendency and I wanted to influence other people coming into college. I wanted to be more equipped on how to do that. After college, I knew more of how to do that. In college, we learned about servant leadership and I think that developed in my personal leadership. (Jillian, Interview)

She feels that servant leadership is so important. She said:

I would believe in not being top-down but being able to serve others. I go with that philosophy of adding value to others and to make people more valuable. (Jillian, Interview)

Jillian said in her sophomore legacy paper:

I think it is vital to have strong character, integrity, and morals as a leader and to stick to them at all times. My views on leadership have changed as a result of Phase II in the area of understanding other people. Increasingly I have found that one rarely knows where others are coming from, yet people so easily jump to conclusions and make assumptions. As a leader, I want to truly 'seek first to understand.' (Jillian, Sophomore Legacy Paper)

Alyssa changed in her leadership thinking as such:

When I look at myself as a leader, I definitely learned tolerance, patience, to be open-minded, not to take offense, not to offend so readily, and not be so judgmental. (Alyssa, Interview)

I think a leader is someone who speaks life into people, not just handing out tasks and delegating, but someone who is underneath you lifting you up by saying, 'You can try harder. You're capable of more. You're smarter than that. You're bigger than that. You're smarter than that.' (Alyssa, Interview)

Summary: Research Question 1

The findings from research question one reveal that the overarching theme in how students describe their understanding of leadership is from that of a central positional leader who bosses people around to shared, collaborative, relational, group oriented leadership in a non-positional role. This is a central theme that emerged from the data in terms of the ways in which female college graduates perceive leadership because all of the participants shared how important collaboration and relationships with mentors, advisors, and other students were in the process of their leadership growth.

All of the participants in this study identified their growth moments in leadership as times they were involved in Experiential Learning. Five of the six participants reported their memorable growth moment in leadership occurred when they held an Undergraduate Leadership position. One participant reported her growth moment in leadership to be when she was working on a senior project in Service. This finding suggests that Experiential Learning, even beyond Undergraduate Leadership, can contribute to growth in leadership identity.

The findings did support movement through the stages of the Leadership Identity Development (LID) model in the participants' college careers and that Experiential Learning contributed to the process. The participants in this study were in Stage 1, "Awareness," during their freshman year when they observed and shadowed other students in the leadership program and started joining clubs and organizations and observed how they were governed and how meetings were run. They moved into Stage 2, "Exploration/Engagement," as they started participating in service and when they joined clubs and organizations and started applying for and experimenting with leadership roles, in freshman and sophomore years. They moved into Stage 3, "Leader Identified," when they began to hold Undergraduate Leadership positions or became leaders among peers in Service and in Study Abroad predominantly in sophomore and junior years.

Stage 4 in the LID Model, "Leadership Differentiated," where students begin to view leadership being exhibited by "non-positional" group members rather than merely by the "positional" leader, is the stage that is difficult for most students to reach according to Komives et al. (2006) and is the stage we know the least about. In this stage, students learn teamwork skills and communication skills such as listening and empathy, build group community, and handle group conflict. The participants in this study arrived in Stage 4 around their sophomore and junior years. Five of the six participants showed evidence of Stage 4 when participating in Experiential Learning such as Undergraduate Leadership and Service. The participants indicated that they realized that leadership is non-positional and shared by recognizing strengths in others to build on

and empowering others. One of the six women showed evidence that she reached Stage 4 through a Non-Experiential Learning venue, a Leader/Follower workshop; she recognized leadership as non-positional in a setting that did not involve an Experiential Learning component. Every participant in this study reached Stage 5, “Generativity,” by making a contribution to the future of their organizations and guiding other students in leadership when they acted as role models and mentors for younger students, and worked with peer leaders on campus. According to the model, students should move into Stage 6, “Integration/Synthesis,” as they end their college careers and transition from the educational context (Komives et al., 2006). Four out of six participants in this study indicated that they began looking to Stage 6 early in their college careers (Sophomore year for Kaylin, Jillian, and Grace; Junior year for Haley; and Senior year for Alyssa and Taylor). Few studies have looked at leadership identity in post-graduates, but all of the women in this study have carried their leadership identity into the world past undergraduate college education into their graduate school programs and career as they continue leadership and service.

Research Question 2

How do recent female college graduates describe their participation in Experiential Learning during college?

To answer this research question, I will present data in two sections, the students’ participation in Experiential Learning along with their leadership outcomes attributed to or strengthened through that Experiential Learning. Through the interview process, I inquired of all the different experiences the participants had during their four years of

college in the leadership program by discussing their Service Learning, Internships, Volunteer Service, Undergraduate Leadership, and Study Abroad. When asking about their leadership outcomes gained through this Experiential Learning, I first explored that from an open-ended view. I then explored eight outcomes, which were identified a priori based on “Change” and the other 7 competencies of the Social Change Model (SCM) to see which of these outcomes the students gained from Experiential Learning and from the leadership program as well. The SCM addressed student leadership competencies on constructs of Change, Citizenship, Collaboration, Commitment, Common Purpose, Congruence, Consciousness of Self, and Controversy with Civility.

Participation in Experiential Learning

Study participants were actively involved in Experiential Learning (defined for this study as Service Learning, Internships, Volunteer Service, Undergraduate Leadership, and Study Abroad). Four of the six participants (Haley, Kaylin, Jillian, and Alyssa) took one or more Service Learning classes. All six of the participants took at least one credit-bearing Internship. Kaylin and Jillian did Internships abroad (see Table 6).

Each participant was active in Volunteer Service. Haley worked with St. Jude’s Children’s Hospital through her sorority as it was their philanthropy. She also worked on a project, “Do You Have Sole?” to raise money and shoes. Kaylin participated in Safe Rides, Blood Drive tables, Tsunami Victim Relief Tables, DanceMarathon through University Volunteers (UV). She also participated in the Community Bunny Hop.

Table 6***Participation in Experiential Learning***

Subject	Service Learning	Internships	Volunteer Service	UG Leadership	Study Abroad
Haley	Psychology of Leadership; Tutored at church; Healthy Alamance – Smoke-Free Restaurants	Common Good Project Tree City USA	St. Jude’s Children’s Hospital; “Do You Have Sole?” shoe drive	College Republicans – Administrative Director; NC Assembly of College Republicans – State Secretary; Delta Delta Delta – Reference Chairman and then VP; Lead Prog – Marketing Director and Phase IV Coordinator	London – Sophomore, 2nd semester
Kaylin	Human Services course	Children Law UK - London.	Safe Rides; Blood Drive; Tsunami Relief Victim Table; DanceMarathon; Community Bunny Hop	Senior Resident Assistant; Ball Room Club leader	London – Internship Junior year
Jillian	Decision making course Spanish course	Oaks Christian Camp, London Political Science	Mis Amigos Tutoring; Tsunami Prayer Vigil; Hunger Awareness Week; AIDS Awareness Week	Campus Outreach Ministry. Lead Prog – Event Coordinator.	England – Internship, Costa Rica, senior year
Grace	None	Jeckyll Island Hotel, GA, wedding planner; Student Life Office; Residence Life Office	Blood Drives	Events Coordinator – EV; RSA Program Chair; RSA Area Councils; Orientation Leader; Admissions Tour Guide	None

Table 6—Continued

Subject	Service Learning	Internships	Volunteer Service	UG Leadership	Study Abroad
Alyssa	Carolina Legislature Human Services course	Office of Public Defender, Washington, DC; University Hospital of Cincinnati, OH – Internship	Shack-A-Thon; Hunger Banquets; Boys and Girls Club; Loaves & Fishes; Duke Children’s Hospital for Autism	SMART Mentor; Multi-Cultural Center – Student Coordinator; Leadership Fellows – Student Advisory Board; Orientation Leader	None
Taylor	None	Camden Rehab – to gain observation hours for Graduate School application; Outpatient Wound Care Center, Greensboro, NC	Duke Children’s Hospital	DanceMarathon – Executive Board Entertainment Chair; Lead Prog Coordinator; Admissions Tour Guide; Orientation Leader; Ropes Course Facilitator	Ghana – Junior year

Jillian stated that Volunteer Service was a big part of college for her. She participated in Mis Amigos Tutoring, Tsunami Prayer Vigil, Hunger Awareness Week, and AIDS Awareness Week through the EV program. Grace did quite a few different service activities during her first few years. She was very involved with EV during her freshman and sophomore years where she coordinated Blood Drives. Alyssa participated in Shack-a-thon, Safe Rides, Hunger Banquets, and the Boys & Girls Club during her freshman year. She also joined the Black Cultural Society where she worked in Step Shows and a Fashion Show to raise money for the Duke Children's Hospital for Autism and also worked with Loaves & Fishes. Taylor was involved with DanceMarathon, a service event to raise money for the Duke Children's Hospital, for all four years in college. She was a dancer the first year and held leadership positions in this organization during the next three years.

Each participant also was involved in Undergraduate Leadership. Haley was the Administrative Director for College Republicans during her freshman year, the State Secretary for the NC Assembly of College Republicans her sophomore year, the Reference Chairman for her sorority (Delta Delta Delta) during her sophomore and junior years. She became the Vice President of Administration of her sorority during the second semester of her junior year. She was also the Marketing Director her junior year and the Phase IV Coordinator her senior year for the leadership program. Kaylin was a Senior Resident Assistant (SRA) during her sophomore year. She was also a leader in the Ballroom Club; she strengthened this club and successfully integrated it into the campus community. Jillian was in student leadership in Campus Outreach Ministry and was also

an Event Coordinator in the [Research Site Leadership Program]. Grace held leadership positions as an Events Coordinator for EV, Program Chair for RSA her freshman year, President of RSA her last three years, distant leader roles for RSA Area Councils, Orientation Leader, and Admissions Tour Guide. Alyssa was a SMART Mentor (Student Mentors Advising Rising Talent) for minority freshmen and transfer students during her junior and senior years. She was a Student Coordinator in the Multi-Cultural Center. She was also elected to the Student Advisory Board in the Leadership Fellows Program. Taylor was the Executive Board Entertainment Chair for DanceMarathon during her sophomore year and was then the Director of DanceMarathon during her junior and senior years. She was also a [Research Site Leadership Program] coordinator for the leadership program, a ropes course facilitator, an Admissions Tour Guide, and an Orientation Leader. Four of the participants (Haley, Kaylin, Jillian, and Taylor) studied abroad. Haley studied abroad in London the second semester of her sophomore year. She reflected that it was an eye-opening experience, allowed her to explore other avenues than just going to law school, and really helped her to grow up. Kaylin studied abroad in London during her junior year. She did an Internship at Children Law UK for the legal rights of children there. Jillian traveled to England for the Internship pre-college and during her sophomore year. She traveled to Costa Rica during her spring semester of her senior year. She is now in Lebanon on a 2 month project during her second year post college as a direct result of her Study Abroad and leadership development during college. Taylor studied abroad in Ghana during winter term of her junior year.

Outcomes Gained from Experiential Learning

Self-reported leadership outcomes. The top five most frequently mentioned learning outcomes from Experiential Learning that emerged in this study were Confidence, Appreciation for Diversity, the Continual Desire to Serve and Give Back, the Continual Desire to Make a Difference or Improve, and Evaluation/Change in Career Path. All of the participants had these five learning outcomes. The next most reported outcomes were Professional Skill Sets, Collaboration and Shared Leadership, a Continual Desire to Grow as a Leader, and Self-Awareness, all of which were mentioned by four participants. Three of the participants listed having a Better Understanding of Leadership and a Continual Desire for Involvement. Two participants reported having better Communication skills. Table 7 displays self-reported outcomes by participant, and Figure 5 shows frequencies of participants' self-reported leadership outcomes.

Table 7

Self-reported Leadership Outcomes by Participant

Outcomes	Haley	Kaylin	Jillian	Grace	Alyssa	Taylor
Appreciation for Diversity	X	X	X	X	X	X
Continual desire to Serve/Give Back	X	X	X	X	X	X
Make a Difference/Improve	X	X	X	X	X	X
Evaluate/Change Career Path	X	X	X	X	X	X
Confidence	X	X	X	X		X
Self-Awareness		X	X	X	X	
Collaboration	X	X	X	X		
Continual Desire to Grow as Leader		X	X	X		X
Professional Skill Sets	X	X		X		X
Better Understanding of Leadership		X	X		X	
Continual Desire for Involvement	X		X		X	X
Communication Skills				X	X	

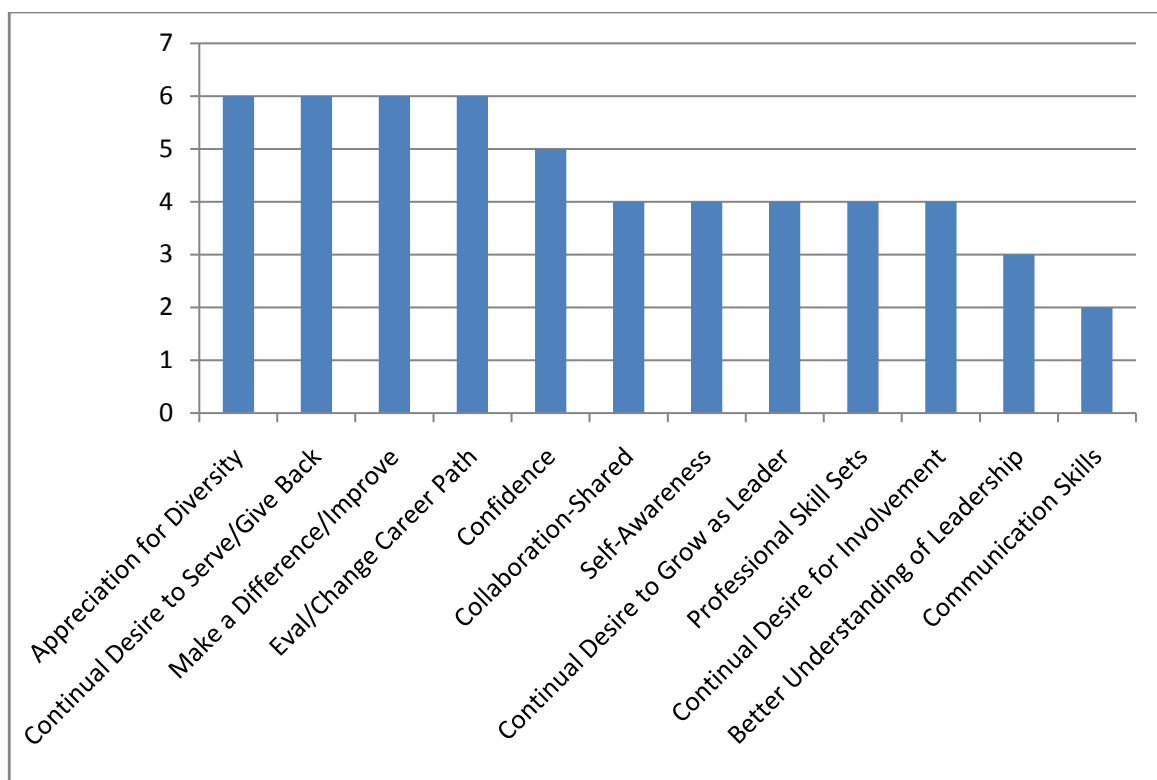


Figure 5. Frequencies of Participants' Self-reporting Leadership Outcomes

Confidence. Five of the six participants reported “Confidence” as an important outcome of Experiential Learning:

After this year, I feel more equipped to implement organizational change within a business setting, and I feel more confident in understanding myself and others.
(Jillian, Junior Legacy Paper)

I think the other outcomes looking back were some of the positions like Tour Guides, working with Orientation, and my second years I was President of a pretty large organization. That was a really great confidence booster for me. I had always been a leader, but to be in a leadership position in your second year of college able to make decisions and representing the university in tour guide or whatever it was just added to that confidence. (Grace, Interview)

Appreciation for diversity. All six of the participants reported “Appreciation for Diversity” as an important outcome of Experiential Learning:

I think definitely it was learning to deal with a variety of people, whether it was people who don’t think like me, that don’t have the same background as me, people from other different countries, and different on a variety of different levels, you don’t have to boss them around to get them to do something, learning you can motivate them in other ways. (Haley, Interview)

. . . the exposure so obviously with the international Study Abroad Internship, the exposure to the culture to living in a different area to being able to immerse myself into the daily culture that was very important to the part of myself that requires adapting so being able to adapt to different situations, sometimes stressful situations, and being able to assimilate appropriately in a different area, so that was the biggest outcome of that program. (Kaylin, Interview)

Continual desire to serve and give back. All six participants reported areas of growth in their leadership identity through Volunteer Service. These women used “Service” in correlation with “Leadership,” claiming that service is a large part of leadership.

I do think that part of leadership is that service component, part of being a leader is showing the group that you are working with that it is about the group and the community whether it be the [her university] community or the outside community and about how the group affects the community and about how the community affects the group. (Grace, Interview)

I am never as content as when I am serving others and every hour I put into DanceMarathon was worth the end outcome. It not only developed me as a leader by working with others and directing others, but showed me where my passions are and who I really want to be. (Taylor, Sophomore Legacy Paper)

Something that has been the greatest thing I’ve learned in college is how to be a servant. I think to be a good leader you must be a good server and I do everything I can to give back to others. The more I take on leadership positions, the more I develop my serving skills and passion to help others. In fact, it has influenced me so much that it is now part of my career plans. (Taylor, Junior Legacy Paper)

This particular person refused to accept any baked goods for his donation claiming (service event), he “doesn’t give to receive anything back.” That statement defines the true meaning of giving and service. This is a fundamental characteristic of leadership. (Kaylin, Freshman Legacy Paper)

Serving teaches leadership, because you constantly have to be accountable and be an example. For one to truly be a leader, they must affect their community. (Alyssa, Freshman Legacy Paper)

As leaders, we have the ability to set great examples and to encourage others to follow our examples, especially when it comes to community service. Helping those who cannot or will not help themselves is a great way to give back to the world. (Haley, Freshman Legacy Paper)

Continual desire to make a difference or improve. All six participants expressed a desire to make a difference and made mention of how they had made a difference in their undergraduate education institution and its study body. Listed are some of those comments:

One of the things I love about being a leader is the ability to take something you care about and make it better. (Haley, Sophomore Legacy Paper)

I can now see that change is a vital part of leading others and leaders are people who see things they can improve and gain the support of peers to help them with these improvements. (Haley, Junior Legacy Paper)

I was really able to introduce a lot of positive thinking and a lot of bonding with officers (DDD sorority), and actually sitting down and making each officer set goals and following up on those goals and encouraging positive teamwork within officers. I don’t know if that has ever been repeated. I think some people just chalked it to that she is in the leadership program and it is just her thing, but I felt it made a difference in the Greek as a whole. (Haley, Interview)

The leadership program and the [her university] community emphasize common good and civic responsibility in every aspect, event, and public project. In fact, this is where my need to actively engage in society originated. I have always wanted to help people, but it became my passion after my [her university] experience. We leave a legacy wherever we interact with an individual or invest some increment of time into the lives of others. In this way, I feel my legacy project has already been set in motion from the convocation to now. I have

witnessed people connect on my account, people develop into passionate and humane leaders to replace my position, and I have grown as a result of witnessing the impact my passion made on their lives. (Kaylin, Senior Legacy Paper)

I left (RSA) in a better spot and left a mark on that organization. (Grace, Interview)

Until my college career, leadership was never something of importance to me. It was mostly an outlet to get into a good college. Most of that is due to the lack of ownership of my high school leadership positions. Here at [her university], I really can make a difference in my leadership roles and I can make changes and decisions. This has given leadership experiences so much more value because what I am doing is worthwhile and I gain practical experience and a sense of accomplishment from it. (Taylor, Junior Legacy Paper)

Evaluation/change in career path. All six participants evaluated their career paths during their Experiential Learning, and two changed their career choices as a result. Jillian chose to go into the field of Student Affairs because of her Undergraduate Leadership and Internship work in Admissions, Residence Life, and the Office of New Student Orientation; she gained confidence from her work with those offices. Taylor had always known she wanted to go into the Physical Therapy field but she learned through Internships that she would want to travel and serve in this field. She had anticipated working in clinics before but now wants to work in trauma and be involved in helping those in severe need such as the 2009 Haiti earthquake disaster. She also realized through her work with the Duke Children's Hospital that she wants to work with children.

Professional skill sets. Four of the six participants mentioned "Professional Skill Sets." Taylor took away skills from her Common Good project where she started developing a scholarship for patients at Duke Children's Hospital so those patients could

use the funds to attend the DanceMarathon event. Her work with the Alumni Relations Office in the setup of these scholarship funds where she had to contact Alumni to get them involved gave her practical skills to help her today in a similar position where she is working with an Alumni Office. In her interview, she stated that she had just held a conference call the night before with the Miracle Network, and because of her undergraduate experience with the Relations Office, she knew a lot about that and was able to contribute greatly. Comments from other participants showed the parallel gains in skill sets:

A big skill I had to use was team work, as with most things. I had several teams of people I was working with and leading. If I had simply bossed them around and made no effort to involve my groups—we would not have been as successful as we were and the team would not be as happy when we finished. I also had to think outside of the box to create a system of presenting information to the chapter so they would not be bored to tears with the information. I am sure I used a lot of other skills as well. (Haley, Sophomore Legacy Paper)

I am more aware of my different skills and how to use them to my advantage. I feel that these skills helped me to improve the organization that I am involved in as well. I would say the most important outcomes were, um, the skill sets I gained and the exposure so obviously with the international Study Abroad Internship, the exposure to the culture to living in a different area to being able to immerse myself into the daily culture that was very important to the part of myself that requires adapting so being able to adapt to different situations, sometimes stressful situations, and being able to assimilate appropriately in a different area, so that was the biggest outcome of that program. (Kaylin, Interview)

One category is the relationship with my advisor/mentor and I think the amount of time and energy and effort they put into getting to know me and really helping me develop the professional skills and all the stuff we are talking about in this interview, all these skills, I think that really kind of helped the commitment and passion. (Grace, Interview)

Collaboration and shared leadership. Five of the six participants expressed Collaboration and Shared Leadership as a leadership learning outcome. Alyssa gave a great example of shared leadership in the current world news:

I don't think anyone would solely want to take responsibility for anything. I mean, when they win, they're happy, but if they lose or there is a mistake, for example, the Oil Spill—and the BP owner of the company. We've heard from the COO and others with their shared responsibility so it's hard to point to one person. I don't know if it has more to do with your experiences or with your personality thinking that leadership is shared, because if you are a selfish person, or you don't understand the importance of teams, then yes, you can say that leadership is sole, but if that is the case then you probably won't be a leader for long, because leaders need followers. (Alyssa, Interview)

Continual desire to grow as a leader. Four of the six participants expressed their desire to continue to grow as a leader today. When asked how satisfied she was with where she is today, Grace replied:

I think right now I'm pretty happy with where I am as a leader however I think there is definitely lots of room for leaders to change and to grow. I think that it's about continual change, you know, you're never the same leader you were several years ago. So I think right now as a new professional ready to enter the world, I think I am ready in a good spot leadership-wise but I think that as I continue to move through the areas of student affairs that I will continue to find areas that I can work on and possibly change, and according to the skills for the position I aspire to. (Grace, Interview)

Self-awareness. Four of the participants felt their self-awareness was strengthened during their Experiential Learning in the Leadership Program:

I would say I think I was challenged a lot at [her university] to reflect on that, do the self-reflection component, that is what sticks out of all the stuff you described, to kind of really be challenged by other people; my mentors and advisors really got me to think about "What does this mean to you?" and "How does that make

you feel?” When I think through all of the different leadership experiences, my advisors started off on the self-reflection and challenged me and that has become more natural to me after the program [graduate school] in Georgia as well. When I came into [her university] I was pretty aware of who I was, and had the confidence piece, but the encouragement of self-reflection really helped to establish who I was in the four years. (Grace, Interview).

Continual desire for involvement. Four of the participants expressed a Continual Desire for Involvement today as a direct result of the Experiential Learning in college.

I worked 40 hours a week on that [Executive Board Entertainment Chair and Director of DanceMarathon] plus class plus everything else, especially my junior and senior years so it was a lot but it was definitely worth it especially when the event came around because I got to meet the miracle families from the Children’s Hospital. I’m still involved. I’m the Dance Marathon Specialist for the State of Florida which means that, um, I travel all over the state and visit colleges and advise them so I’m the liaison between schools and the Children’s Miracle Network Office. (Taylor, Interview)

When asked her most important leadership learning outcomes, Taylor replied:

Once I got into graduate school, I wanted to get involved again because of that [Experiential Learning]. I think if I wouldn’t have been involved in college, then I wouldn’t have had any interest. Rewards—stay a community leader long term. (Taylor, Interview)

Better understanding of leadership. Three participants reported a better understanding of leadership as a result of their Experiential Learning in college. Kaylin gained a better understanding of leadership which includes working effectively with people toward a common goal that even helps in her daily engagement with people. Jillian gained a wider perspective on seeing how leadership is needed in everything and is accomplished through empowering others.

I suppose it contributed to how I feel as a leader to who I am as a leader. I guess giving me a set of guidelines so understanding that leadership is not about being the boss all the time but that it is about working effectively with other people toward the common goal so that understanding of leadership framed what I do, not only in course work, but also in the way that I engage with people in daily experiences with certain circumstances. (Kaylin, Interview)

I think, um, one of top things would be, I mentioned this earlier, but getting a wider perspective on seeing how leadership is needed in everything, and then I think leadership involves empowering others, seeing that value, pursued for my job since college—working to empower other people. (Jillian, Interview)

Improved communication skills. Two of the participants (Alyssa and Taylor) reported “Improved Communication Skills” as a result of their Experiential Learning.

Alyssa explained how an internship helped her in this area:

In my freshman year, I was working for my Mom’s company in an internship helping in the Medical Company office, working with international clients—because my Mom is Costa Rican. Communication is so important. It’s hard to communicate if you don’t understand someone. Learning how to be professional and versatile, how to go from professional to laid back, adapt to different environments and different types of people. It’s important for college because we had to go from organization to organization with different demographics. (Alyssa, Interview)

Seven “C”s—Outcomes of the Common Good Model

As for the 7 “C”s of the Leadership for the Common Good model, all of the students shared gains in all of the group categories, which are Change, Collaboration, Common Purpose, Consciousness of Self, and Controversy with Civility as direct results of their Experiential Learning. With the exception of one participant who reported that her gains in one particular area, Controversy with Civility, did not come through

Experiential Learning, but rather through college life in general, all gains reported by participants were achieved through various types of Experiential Learning.

Citizenship, Commitment, and Congruence are the “individual” factors of the Social Change Model. Change, Collaboration, Common Purpose, Consciousness of Self, and Controversy with Civility are the “group” factors of the model. Based on the positive findings for all six participants in each of the “group” outcomes as shown in Table 8, Experiential Learning and the leadership program had very positive impact on the “group” outcomes. This type of learning appeared to have had less impact on the “individual” outcomes because only a few of the participants reported gains in these areas. Figure 6 shows frequencies of individual SCM leadership outcomes.

Group outcomes.

Change. Participants were asked about outcomes of “Change” with regard to the extent to which they believe in the potential of change as a positive force for groups; their comfort with transition and initiating new ways of looking at things, bringing new life to an organization, working well in changing environments; and their ability to be open to new ideas and look for new ways to do things. The common themes for “Change” were that Undergraduate Leadership, Study Abroad, Service, Internships, and the Leadership Program as a whole contributed to the outcome of “Change.” When exploring the impact of Experiential Learning on “Change,” all participants concurred that their Experiential Learning did make a contribution. Four participants credited their growth in “Change” to Undergraduate Leadership experiences. Kaylin pointed to Undergraduate Leadership and Study Abroad. Jillian credited Study Abroad. Grace credited Undergraduate Leadership.

Alyssa credited Internships while Taylor credited Undergraduate Leadership and Volunteer Service. None of the participants specifically cited Service Learning as contributing to her outcomes in “Change.”

Table 8

Experiences with Contribution to SCM Outcomes

Outcome	Participants	Experience
“Group” Outcomes		
Change	All	UG Lead, Study Abroad, Internship, Service, Leadership Program
Collaboration	All	UG Lead, Study Abroad, Internship, Service, Leadership Program
Common Purpose	All	UG Lead, Study Abroad, Internship, Service, Leadership Program
Consciousness of Self	All	UG Lead, Study Abroad, Service, Leadership Program
Controversy with Civility	All	
	Haley, Kaylin, Jillian	UG Lead, Study Abroad, Internship, Service, Leadership Program
	Grace, Taylor	UG Lead, Internship, Service, Leadership Program
	Alyssa	College Life in General—Orgs and Dorms
“Individual” Outcomes		
Citizenship	Grace, Alyssa, Taylor	UG Lead, Service, Internship
Commitment	Kaylin, Grace, Alyssa Taylor	UG Lead, Service, Leadership Program
Congruence	Taylor	UG Lead, Service

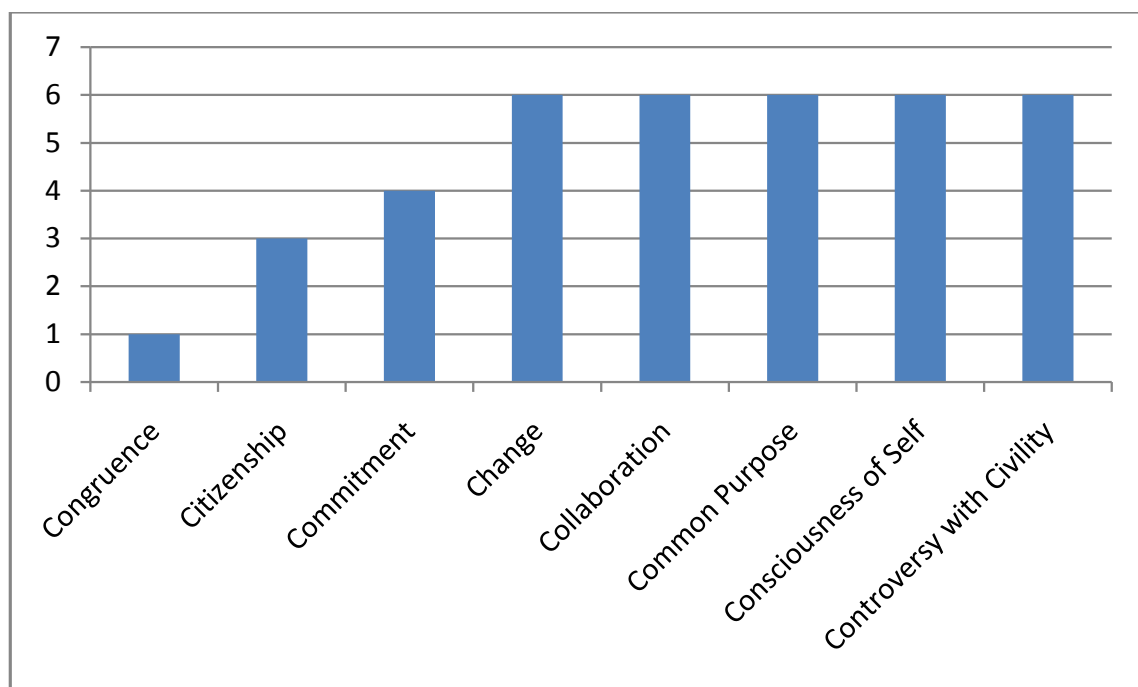


Figure 6. *Frequencies of SCM Leadership Outcomes*

Haley said about the impact of her Undergraduate Leadership experiences:

I think it definitely made me comfortable with change because being a leader is never consistent, it is never static; it is never going to stay exactly the same. You have different people coming in, and you have different project coming on, and so I think it made me aware that you can't have the same people in the same positions all the time, you run out of ideas and things become stagnant. (Haley, Interview)

The international experience honed Kaylin's "change" skills because it was the support framework that empowered her to go further.

It was almost as if they gave you a bag of tools, the necessary resources, and give you everything you need within your reach but you had to go and get it. The leadership program really helped me to take the initiative which has been absolutely invaluable especially right now transitioning from school to the work place and especially with the plight of the economy today, and then using that as a

means to survive so combining what skills I already have with my education and then using them as a means to survive, essentially, so I think it really helped in terms of honing in on those skills and being comfortable with change. (Kaylin, Interview)

Collaboration. Participants were asked about their leadership outcomes in “Collaboration” with regard to the extent to which they value working with others in a common effort, working well with others, actively listening to what others have to say, acting as a cooperative group member, believing that collaboration produces better results, and believing that their contributions are recognized by others in the group they belong to or work with. The common themes for “Collaboration” were that Undergraduate Leadership, Study Abroad, Internships, Service, and the Leadership Program as a whole made contributions. When exploring the impact of Experiential Learning on Collaboration, all participants reported that their Experiential Learning did make a contribution. Three participants spoke of Undergraduate Leadership as contributing to gains in “Collaboration.” Three participants spoke of Volunteer Service. One participant spoke of Study Abroad. One participant mentioned her Internship experience as contributing to Collaboration. None mentioned Service-Learning as contributing in this area.

Kaylin said:

Collaboration is difficult because it requires trust in other people to perform to the level of quality and completion as you do. (Kaylin, Senior Legacy Paper)

When asked how Experiential Learning helped with this, Kaylin said that she learned that a leader must be flexible:

What I think I learned from collaborating and Experiential Learning in organizations and clubs that I was involved with was that you have to know the expectations in order to make progress to understand the reality, and the reality is that people may not do things the way you do them and putting extra pressure on them to do that is not going to necessarily help anything so what you do is calculate that as a part of your risks and you make time for anything that may be lacking in product so what I learned is to lose that expectation and plan for amendments I guess. (Kaylin, Interview)

Common purpose. Participants were asked about their leadership outcomes with regard to the extent to which they are committed to collaborating with other on shared endeavors, are committed to a collective purpose in groups they belong to or have worked with, see importance in developing a common direction in a group in order to get anything done, contribute to the goals of the group, know the priorities of others, help shape the mission of a group, believe that common values drive an institution, work well when you know the collective values of a group, and support what your group is trying to accomplish. The common themes for "Common Purpose" were that Undergraduate Leadership for five participants, Study Abroad for one participant, Service for two participants, and the Leadership Program as a whole for two participants contributed to this outcome. When exploring the impact of Experiential Learning on Common Purpose, all six participants absolutely believed that their Experiential Learning did make a contribution.

I think definitely you have to have a common purpose to get things done, you can't have just the leader who is passionate about it or else you'll be dragging people along rather than standing behind them and encouraging them to do what needs to get done. (Haley, Interview)

Kaylin saw the importance of getting people to connect with you and network with you in order to buy into a common purpose. She believes that the combination of the leadership program as a whole, the Study Abroad in London with the International Internship, the Service with the Ballroom Club Change Project and the Bunny Hop, and Undergraduate Leadership with the Honor Society contributed most to this outcome. She expressed:

I had to get people engaged in an idea that might not have heard of before, and get them to volunteer their time [Bunny Hop Service Event], and then organize these people around a common purpose, all of which used skills that I gained from the leadership program. (Kaylin, Interview)

Consciousness of self. Participants were asked about their leadership outcomes in “Consciousness of Self” with regard to the extent to which they are aware of the values, emotions, attitudes, and beliefs that motivate them to action; articulate their priorities; have a high self-esteem; are usually self confident; hold with priority the things that they are passionate about in life; know themselves pretty well; can easily self-reflect and describe their own personalities; describe how they are similar to other people; and express themselves with comfort. The common themes for “Consciousness of Self” were that the Leadership Program as a whole, Study Abroad, Undergraduate Leadership, and Service contributed to the outcome of “Consciousness of Self.” When exploring the impact of Experiential Learning on Consciousness of Self, all six participants reported that their Experiential Learning did make a contribution. Three participants mentioned the Leadership Program as a whole, one mentioned Study Abroad, one mentioned

Undergraduate Leadership, and one mentioned Service as contributing to Consciousness of Self.

As for Consciousness of Self, Kaylin felt the leadership program along with her entire college education helped her with self-awareness. She believes that:

If you don't know how you're coming across, what you believe in, or what your biases are, then not only are people going to question whether they should follow you because you would come off as ingenuine [sic] , but also they're not going to be able to relate to you because you're unable to relate to yourself. So I would say this idea of consciousness awareness is so necessary in leadership if you want to interact in a positive way and in an empowering way with other individuals. (Kaylin, Interview)

During Jillian's interview, she conveyed that Study Abroad along with the Leadership Program as a whole added to her consciousness of self. She said:

You learn a lot about yourself when you're in a new place, out of your comfort zone, and you're stretched. (Jillian, Interview)

Controversy with civility. Participants were asked about their leadership outcomes in "Controversy with Civility" with regard to the extent to which they recognize that differences are inevitable and valuable in groups, are open to the ideas of others, believe that creativity can come from conflict at times, value differences in others, feel enriched by the opinions of others rather than struggling when hearing ideas that are different from their own, believe that great harmony can come out of disagreement, respect opinions other than their own and are comfortable when someone disagrees with them. The common themes for "Controversy with Civility" were that the Undergraduate Leadership, Study Abroad, Service, and the Leadership Program as a whole contributed

to this outcome. When exploring the impact of Experiential Learning on Controversy with Civility, all six participants reported that their Experiential Learning did make a contribution. Four mentioned Undergraduate Leadership, one mentioned Study Abroad, two mentioned Service, and one mentioned the Leadership Program as a whole.

Kaylin feels that working with the Ballroom Club (Undergraduate Leadership) contributed most to her outcome in Controversy with Civility in that she had to convey mission to people with different personalities and opinions. She even went so far as to say:

I would pose a question that would cause conflict intentionally so they could see the different side of the issue. This didn't mean that I was advocating the resolution but it provided a different perspective that could lead to alternate resolutions. (Kaylin, Interview)

Individual outcomes.

Citizenship. Participants were asked about their outcomes in “Citizenship” with regard to the extent to which they believe that they must actively serve the environments and communities to which they are connected and give their time to make a difference for others and to make their communities better places. The common themes for “Citizenship” were that Undergraduate Leadership, Service, and Internships contributed to this outcome. When exploring the impact of Experiential Learning on Citizenship, three participants reported that their Experiential Learning did make a contribution.

I think one of the things I took away from [her university] was the idea that you are thinking globally and acting locally and in the [Research Site Leadership Program] as well, I think I definitely understand the importance of needing to give back to your community. I think in the back of my mind is the idea of giving

back to the community within the [her university] bubble knowing dedicating a lot of the service I did and benefitting in the leadership position I did in the [her university] community whether living in the residence halls or other leaders on campus, or there might have been organizations that were doing service for groups outside of the [her university] community, but what I was doing was doing service where our campus benefitted within the [her university] walls. That was definitely a point that I came away with, to do service and to give back. (Grace, Interview)

I think the DanceMarathon and my contribution back to our community played a big part. The Children's Miracle Network Hospital because money goes to that so I think that is a great thing for the local community. Um, on the Ghana trip, I bought a bunch of books, soccer balls, gifts, so that is more of a global thing. And Internships, I realized I wanted to go into the Physical Therapy field so that's a profession to serve and I want to travel and serve because of Ghana and my Internships. (Taylor, Interview)

Commitment. Participants were asked about their leadership outcomes in “Commitment” with regard to the extent to which they possess commitment and steadfastness in relation to a person, idea, or activity; devote time and energy to things that are important to them; stick with others through difficult times; are focused on your responsibilities; can be counted on to do your part; follow through on your promises; and hold yourself accountable for responsibilities you have agreed to. The common themes for “Commitment” were that Undergraduate Leadership and Service contributed to this outcome. When exploring the impact of Experiential Learning on Commitment, four participants reported that their Experiential Learning did make a contribution.

Grace came to her university with strong commitment but felt that Undergraduate Leadership strengthened her commitment. She believed:

[Her university] gave me the opportunities, whether I went looking for them or not, to develop the things I wanted to focus on my passions and what I wanted to be committed to, whether orientation or RSA or Admissions, things I didn't say,

‘this will help me with my commitment,’ but I came out of there with commitments, whether through good or bad times, so I came to [her university] with that but I think the experiences I was involved with while at [her university] helped me strengthen my commitment. (Grace, Interview)

Congruence. Participants were asked about their leadership outcomes in “Congruence” with regard to the extent to which they think, feel, and behave consistently and honestly toward others; their behaviors are congruent with their beliefs; they see the importance of and act on their beliefs; their actions are consistent with their values; and they are genuine and truthful. The common themes for “Congruence” were those of Undergraduate Leadership and Service. When exploring the impact of Experiential Learning on Congruence, only one participant stated that her Experiential Learning did make a contribution to her “Congruence.”

Campus Outreach is important to me because it enhances my faith. All leaders must have things they are passionate about and a moral code to be effective. They must know that what they are taking a lead in coincides with their belief system. (Taylor, Freshman Legacy Paper)

The other five participants felt that they did not achieve Congruence while in college.

Summary: Research Question 2

The participants revealed the different types of Experiential Learning they had participated in, with pride and with comments of how these experiences stand out in their minds when asked about their college life.

The findings for research question two reveal that there were self-reported leadership outcomes that they attributed to Experiential Learning along with the leadership outcomes from the Social Change model. I questioned about successful

outcomes for each of the 7Cs (Change, Citizenship, Collaboration, Commitment, Common Purpose, Congruence, Consciousness of Self, and Controversy with Civility), but first I asked the participants what they considered to be their most important outcomes from the Experiential Learning to see what meanings they made from the experiences. The data revealed the top five self-reported leadership outcomes that emerged from this study were Confidence, Appreciation for Diversity, the Continual Desire to Serve and Give Back, the Continual Desire to Make a Difference or Improve, and Evaluate/Change Career Path. All six participants discussed how their involvement in Experiential Learning had a positive influence over their leadership identity in the areas of these five learning outcomes. The next most reported outcomes were Self-Awareness, Collaboration and Shared Leadership, a Continual Desire to Grow as a Leader and Professional Skill Sets. Three of the participants also listed having a Better Understanding of Leadership and a Continued Desire for Involvement. Two participants also reported having better Communication skills.

The data suggests that for the 7 “C”s of the Leadership for the Common Good model, all six participants made numerous references and gave examples of how Experiential Learning had a positive impact on their leadership identity. All six participants pointed out that Experiential Learning and the leadership program helped with all five of the “group” outcomes, which are Change, Collaboration, Common Purpose, Consciousness of Self, and Controversy with Civility. Citizenship, Commitment, and Congruence are the “individual” factors of the Social Change Model. Experiential Learning did make a contribution to Commitment for Kaylin, Grace, Alyssa,

and Taylor; to Citizenship for Grace, Alyssa, and Taylor, and to Congruence for Taylor. The findings suggest that Experiential Learning and the leadership program are more likely to make an impact on the “group” outcomes than on “individual” components.

Research Question 3

When considering the acquisition of and growth in leadership identity, what undergraduate experiences are meaningful for recent female college graduates?

To answer this research question, I derived three themes that emerged as meaningful to their leadership identity development. The most pronounced is that of Experiential Learning, which is followed by Relationships and Mentors and Mentoring. Also, an important finding with regard to Experiential Learning is categorized under the theme of Breadth of Involvement. Although Experiential Learning was deemed very necessary for this growth in leadership identity, the participants expressed that too much of a good thing can be a bad thing; the students had to filter out when too involved and focus on the things they were passionate about in order to be more effective.

Experiential Learning—Theory to Practice

The data for this research question was obtained from my inquiry about the participants’ feelings of how Experiential Learning may have had any impact on their leadership identity. This section is filled with very rich quotes from the women in this study. Nothing I can say would show the real value they perceived from their Experiential Learning so I will let their voices be heard as they say it best. Again, the data was triangulated from comments in their legacy papers and in their interviews. This section ends with a discussion on findings that support that Experiential Learning helps

students' movement through the LID Model along with other contributions reported to help Leadership Identity in female college students.

Haley. Haley had in her closing comment in her freshman year-end paper:

In general, Emerging Leaders has helped me to grow as a leader by providing ideas and theories that I could test in leadership positions and in classes all year long. I learned more about myself as a leader and how I work with others on a variety of levels. I was able to experiment with different things and watched as others did the same. (Haley, Freshman Legacy Paper)

In her sophomore year she said:

I was learning about my personal leadership style. I was able to experiment with different things and watch their results. I also learned even more about how rewarding hard work and commitment is after something is successfully completed. (Haley, Sophomore Legacy Paper)

In her junior year paper, she commented about working with DDD officers to include them in the process of creating programs and leading discussions by saying:

I drew on past experiences and showed them how they could lead the younger officers into this new phase in our chapter. I was able to use their experiences to create a feeling of ownership in them for the new system and I will definitely use this technique in the future. (Haley, Junior Legacy Paper)

She also went on to say:

I really liked having the change projects to work on while learning specific theories and ideas for dealing with change because I had a direct experience in applying what we learned. (Haley, Junior Legacy Paper)

In her senior year paper she commented:

Our Lead Labs as well as the service project we did in Group Dynamics helped me to put both of these phases together and see how the theories we learn about actually played out in reality. Leadership is not only skills we learned to become better leaders, but also it is about the situations you are placed in and the people you are working with. (Haley, Senior Legacy Paper)

She further stated:

I would have been fine had I not been involved, but I do not think I would have been challenged to grow as a leader and I probably would not have had the confidence in my abilities to go after the leadership roles I have held on campus. (Haley, Senior Legacy Paper)

During her interview, she commented:

I think definitely in terms of now, what I have now that is reflected from that [Experiential Learning], definitely being in law school it is very easy to just go along and just go to class, but I think my involvement in college really enabled me to be involved in law school and to take on more leadership roles, right now I am currently the chair of the Law Republicans group so I continue that involvement and that leadership, and for next year I am incoming Managing Editor for the Law Review, so I'll be right below the Editor in Chief, so I think that being VP in sorority and being the Marketing Director for the Leadership Program helped me to be the Managing Editor for the Law Review. (Haley, Interview)

Haley said she wouldn't have had the confidence to go after the roles she had on campus had she not been in the leadership program. When asked what gave her the most confidence, she said:

Knowing I had specific theories and ideas behind me in what I was doing helped me realize what I was doing was important and important to other people even if they didn't express that to me specifically. I think it was overall being in the program and having other people that were learning the same things as me who were going out and trying to be leaders like I was and being able to bounce questions and ideas off of them. (Haley, Interview)

When asked what experiences were most meaningful, in class experiences or out of class experiences, when considering the acquisition of and growth in leadership identity, she felt:

Definitely both. You need both. This is where the law school leadership program has a downfall. You need both classroom and the application. You have to teach people the theory but then you have to have people go out and do the theory and reflect on how they used the theory. It's not going to be useful if they're not required to go out, use it, and reflect. You have to have both. (Haley, Interview)

Kaylin. In Kaylin's junior year-end paper, she identified the importance of bringing theory into actual experiences:

Phase III provided an understanding of how to apply the theory of leadership to a project in order to facilitate progressive change. (Kaylin, Junior Legacy Paper)

She wrote a poem with her junior year legacy paper entitled, "Reflection." In this poem, she wrote:

Tangibility which carries the weight of my worth...
Instead of visionary or revolutionary thought. (Kaylin, Junior Legacy Paper)

Her comments on this were:

There needs to be some kind of melding or artifact after it's all said and done, so I guess what influenced me to write those words is the ideas about how life should be and it is absolutely nothing if people can't experience that in reality. It needs to be something practical, tangible, something that people can come in contact with that is inevitable of the change you envisioned before. (Kaylin, Interview)

When asked what was most meaningful in getting her to where she is today as a leader, Kaylin chose her Undergraduate Leadership:

I would say the Ballroom Club because it was the epitome of taking a passion and projecting it into something that other people can enjoy. It was like institutionalizing your passion, you know, so it was what one of the things that everybody seeks to do in life, that not always has the courage or skills or whatever to bring it about, so I would say that had a lasting that I would say validated my passion, for one, and it also showed me that I have the ability to bring my passions out into the real world. They're not just ideas; they're not just feelings. They can actually have thread and gain momentum if I focus and manage them accordingly. I would say that would be the most meaningful one. (Kaylin, Interview)

Jillian. Jillian said, even as early on as the end of her sophomore year:

From these experiences, I have learned and reflected a lot on the type of working environment I want to work in, how to lead in different situations, how to work with people and groups, and how to manage people. These are areas that some of the most growth will come through experience. (Jillian, Sophomore Legacy Paper)

She was referring to her Event Coordinator position in the [Research Site Leadership Program]. She felt that she was learning the most when she was empowered to make decisions, lead, and plan, especially when people were going to her to ask questions and she was the go-to person. Jillian also felt that doing an Internship was the best way to rub shoulders with the leaders and people who could help her make a difference when she worked with the camps in England. She too mentioned that she learned more when she got to work with people in her organizations by thinking and then trying it out with other people and then got to further learn from other people in her leadership program, people who were trying to accomplish the same goals that she was trying to accomplish.

Jillian noted the importance of the experiences and reflection. She talked about her different areas of growth in her understanding and application of leadership, which came through:

A lot of reflection, classes, discussion, jobs I've held, and new experiences I have been fortunate enough to have. (Jillian, Sophomore Legacy Paper)

She also said:

I see so many ways which I have grown through the different components [of the leadership program]. I have seen how I am ahead of so many other college students in the working world and so I believe in the program and what it can do for other [her university] students. (Jillian, Senior Legacy Paper)

Grace. In her senior year paper Grace summed up:

I originally started off in my freshman year as a Programming Chair and spent the last three years as President of RSA. These four years have been some of the most valuable experience for me. I was given the chance to learn about leadership and myself from firsthand experience. It was a time to try different approaches, methods, and techniques and figure out what worked and what did not work. (Grace, Senior Legacy Paper)

She stated:

It was nice to see a real world experience of all of the things that we learned in the workshops and Lead Labs. (Grace, Sophomore Legacy Paper)

She valued reflection when she was looking forward to her Common Good senior project:

It will be good to take a Common Good project and really give back to the community while reflecting on the last three years of leadership and lessons. (Grace, Junior Legacy Paper)

She shared more thoughts:

It has been very interesting to continue my own development while observing the leadership styles and growth of others. In my position as President of RSA this year, I have been more aware of group dynamics, leadership growth, conflict styles, and more, all because of my own experiences and what I have learned during my four years in the [Research Site Leadership Program]. (Grace, Senior Legacy Paper)

She went on to further say:

I feel as though I have become a different person in my ability to think through all aspects of a situation and really think about the dynamics of a group and what is the best solution for a challenge, even though it may not be the most popular decision. I also feel as though I have been able to get closer to people and develop more personal, worthwhile working relationships and friendships. (Grace, Interview)

During her interview, she said:

Like I said you have to get out there and have the experiences. You can't learn about leadership through a book. I mean you can start there but you have to get out there and see what to do, um, so who I am, because as a leader, I don't think I could have learned any of that without having the experiences. (Grace, Interview)

When describing her satisfaction with where she is today, Grace said:

I am definitely satisfied with my undergraduate experience at [her university]. I wouldn't trade it for anything and I think it definitely played a key role with where I am today. As I said earlier, it really kind of changed my career path, not only classroom but also out of classroom experiences, changed my career path. (Grace, Interview)

Alyssa. Alyssa's Undergraduate Leadership, Service, and Internships helped her most with her leadership identity. Alyssa felt that her out-of-classroom experience helped her as much as her in-classroom experiences when achieving leadership identity.

I would say both. I think that practical leadership that you learn in the classroom helps you with working on yourself, for example, if you are working on the MB [Myers Briggs] or the Strengths Quest, you learn what INSF means and what ESFJ [MB types] means so you say 'I notice that this is . . .' and how that comes across to other people. It's one thing to know that and articulate it but it's another thing to see it and watch it. But when you're actually volunteering and you're out in the community and you're working with other people, that's when all of that practical classroom stuff kind of comes together for you and you actually see it. You watch yourself when you are speaking with people and you see the pain in their face and you can actually catch that or catch yourself and you're like, 'Oh, I'm so sorry' and you're like 'Wow, I am way too much of an "E" right now' or too much of a this or that. So I would definitely say it's both of them because one without the other is kind of like a puzzle not put together. I don't learn the same, at least for me, because I'm the type of person, I'm hands on, I like to learn from but at the same time I like to see it in action and the practicalities of it all. (Alyssa, Interview)

She also pointed out about the Experiential Learning:

It is essential—not just how I see myself as a leader, but in your college career, I feel sorry for the people who go through college and do no extra-curricular. They don't get engaged; they could just sit home and take on-line classes because they're not engaged. They're actually more engaged doing on-line classes because you have to work with other students on-line. Experiential learning is essential especially learning about yourself because you are defining who you are. Taking a lead role in an organization, stepping up to the plate doing those different things, getting out in community, humbling yourself, that always, especially with [her university] students are so privileged and drive nicer cars than the faculty, especially coming from a place you don't worry. You don't ever want to look at your Volunteer Service as a hand out. Trust me—you need them just as much as they need you and if you don't have that piece where you're forced to humble yourself or where you're forced to put yourself in someone else's shoes, then you're missing out on who you are and what you're capable of. (Alyssa, Interview)

Taylor. Taylor started her leadership experience in her sophomore year. She reflected in her sophomore year paper:

The best part about this year at [her university] was by far my leadership position. I was the Entertainment Chair on the DanceMarathon Executive Committee, and I grew very passionate about the event after several visits to Duke Children's Hospital and countless hours of planning. I am never as content as when I am serving others and every hour I put into DanceMarathon was worth the end outcome. It not only developed me as a leader by working with others and directing others, but showed me where my passions are and who I really want to be. (Taylor, Sophomore Legacy Paper)

In her junior year-end paper, she said:

I also realized this year that had it not been for the [Research Site Leadership Program] I might not be where I am today. Without the requirement to be involved as a leader and the service hour requirement freshman year, I may not have striven to fully engage at [her university]. (Taylor, Junior Legacy Paper)

Also reflected in her junior year paper was:

Until my college career, leadership was never something of importance to me. It was mostly an outlet to get into a good college. Most of that is due to my lack of ownership of my high school leadership positions. Here at [her university] I really can make a difference in my leadership roles and I can make change and decisions. This has given leadership experiences so much more value because what I am doing is worthwhile and I gain practical experience and a sense of accomplishment from it. (Taylor, Junior Legacy Paper)

Taylor noted in her junior year-end paper:

Something that has been the greatest thing I've learned in college is how to be a servant. I think to be a good leader you must be a good server and I do everything I can to give back to others. The more I take on leadership positions, the more I develop my serving skills and passion to help others. In fact, it has influenced me so much that it is now part of my career plans. (Taylor, Junior Legacy Paper)

Overall, the meanings that these participants attributed to Experiential Learning in their leadership program were that all presented positive influence (see Table 9).

Table 9

Participants' Meanings of Experiential Learning in their Leadership

Meanings

- Chance to put it into practice
 - Knowing how to deal with change in the working environment
 - Learn from others in program and in other organizations or Internships or international travel
 - Experience more growth when people come to you with questions and you are the go-to person
 - Learn what type of working environment you want to work in
 - Learn how to lead in different situations
 - Learn how to work with people and groups
 - Learn how to manage people
 - Allowed for testing ideas and theories
 - Gave them a space to try new approaches, methods, techniques—experiment
 - Instilled confidence
 - Involvement gave them a desire to give back, serve, improve, mentor, and grow as leader
 - Taught them Challenge the process, ask the right questions—in order to get things done in the most efficient manner
 - Changed career paths
 - Allowed them to follow their passions
 - Continue my own development while observing the leadership styles and growth of others
 - Option to better learn and retain through firsthand experience—attach value to things that engage with other people
 - Opportunity to lead in an arena where it is ok to fail
-

Not one participant mentioned any Experiential Learning experience that was not a positive learning experience. One participant did mention a time when her advisors pulled her aside to share some constructive criticism; that was not the most pleasant experience for her but she learned much from it and grew from that particular situation. Another participant mentioned a time when she had a bad experience in an undergraduate position with another student in the organization but they worked out the issue and she actually ended up learning and growing from that situation.

The following statements, including one closing remark from each participant, clearly outline the importance of Experiential Learning in their leadership program:

1. I personally don't think just sitting in the classroom and learning academically how to be a better leader works on its own. You have to practice it. You can definitely learn it but part of that learning is going out and doing it. (Haley, Interview)
2. I think again, the Experiential Learning was, without a doubt, valuable because it uses my personality type; it is relational. I think psychologically I tend to attach value to things that engage me with other people. The reflections brought about a lot of understanding, so it's one of those things that you look back in hindsight and say, 'well yes, the experience was valuable for the present moment', but in actuality, that reflection is a component of what I have done thus far. (Kaylin, Interview)
3. I would say experiences and reflection made the most impact toward my leadership identity. My time at the Oaks was really good. I also learn by experience. We had a lot of weird dynamics and you're living with these people all the time, so it was a mix of dynamics on people as a team so I learned a lot about dynamics. I think a lot that helped with that learning was the reflection on the experiences. (Jillian, Interview)
4. As I look back on my four years, I really think that I would not be the person or the leader that I am today without the people that I have met or the experiences that I have gone through in my four years. (Grace, Senior Legacy Paper)

5. The importance of Experiential Learning—I think that’s everything. It is definitely the experience working if you can learn, I can learn about all the physical therapy in the world, but it’s different if you don’t get to do it, getting your hands on it. You just don’t learn it if you don’t experience it, I mean you could learn it I suppose, but it’s not the same. I think it makes all the difference. I think it’s the part that made the difference more than anything, any workshops or anything. I think because learning it is one thing but working with groups will never be text book, it will always be different. You never know how to do it without practicing it. I don’t think you can really just learn that. People are so dynamic. (Taylor, Interview)

The participants reflected that, without Experiential Learning, they would not be at the place they are today with regard to their leadership development or in further education and career path. All six participants listed components of their Experiential Learning as reinforcing elements of their leadership growth. Implications of these findings will be the focus of Chapter V.

Support for Experiential Learning’s Contribution to Movement through the LID Model

Movement from Stage 3 to Stage 4 in the LID Model is the component that we know the least about (Komives et al., 2006); I concluded that Experiential Learning made a contribution to this movement. Five of the six participants reached this stage of leadership identity development going through the experience of either Undergraduate Leadership (4 participants) or Volunteer Service (1 participant). The participants indicated that they realized that leadership is non-positional and shared by recognizing strengths in others to build on and empowering others. One of the six students indicates she learned this through a Leader/Follower workshop without the Experiential Learning

component. These figures suggest that Experiential Learning may help move students through this important stage in the LID Model.

Table 10

LID—Movement from Stage 3 to Stage 4

Participant	Component that Moved Participant from Stage 3 to Stage 4 in LID
Haley	Undergraduate Leadership—VP of Delta Delta Delta
Kaylin	Volunteer Service—Observing Leadership
Jillian	Leader/Follower Workshop— (Non-Experiential)
Grace	Undergraduate Leadership—President of RSA
Alyssa	Undergraduate Leadership—Secretary of College Ministry, Youth Mentor
Taylor	Undergraduate Leadership—Entertainment Chair of DanceMarathon

Other Factors Influencing Leadership Identity

Relationships. The women in this leadership program shadowed other students and learned from them, developed relationships with mentors, were role models to others, included others in the process when leading change, and learned to work collaboratively through empowering others. In addition to Experiential Learning, the women commented repeatedly about the importance of relationships in their leadership identity:

1. You have to put time into it and time getting to know the people that you are leading in order to be an effective leader instead of just bossing them around. (Haley, Interview)

2. I was able to relate to peer leaders with similar problems and concerns, regarding leadership, which led to the creation of a community and support group outside of the leadership office. (Kaylin, Freshman Legacy Paper)
3. Working through a lot of leadership program stuff through the fellows program really helped me because we had so many different personalities in the group, and yet we were able to come together and have a great time and we still email each other now to stay in touch, people are getting married, and buying houses and having babies, and that downtime is as valuable as getting what you need to get done. (Haley, Interview)
4. Most meaningful? I guess in the end if I had to pick one, I'd choose RSA and my relationships in that. (Grace, Interview)
5. The classes and workshops are great, but the best part is really meeting other people who want to make a difference and working together. (Taylor, Freshman Legacy Paper)
6. A huge part of leadership for me is about showing true concern for one's followers and those you may be serving. Therefore, genuine relationships will continue to be a priority. (Jillian, Sophomore Legacy Paper)

Mentors. Three women in this study reported that mentors in their college career helped with their leadership identity. In the LID model, Stage Three “Leader Identified” is where students hold leader-centric views and believe that one person can be the positional leader. Students here realize they can become leaders through positions they take and may connect to mentors or find organizations to fit their values and interests in this stage. The participants shared how important collaboration and relationships with mentors, advisors, and other students were in the process of their leadership growth. They attributed some of their confidence to their mentors.

Grace discussed a growth moment in leadership in her junior year when her mentors approached her during the group's annual retreat to give her constructive criticism. This is where she learned things that she could change or improve upon to be a

better President to her organization and to grow as a leader. These mentors used this opportunity to help her reflect upon her experiences and growth in leadership. Grace feels that her mentors along with reflection during college stick out in her mind when it comes to Consciousness of Self.

Kaylin learned much about leadership through watching how the administrators of the leadership program interacted with the students in her program, which was very relational. They talked to her as if they were friends who knew her or wanted to get to know her. They mentored her in having her outcomes matching her objectives even if that meant having the flexibility to tailor her course. She mentioned that she felt this ideal mentality was mimicked throughout the institution in classes and in the work study program as well as the leadership program.

Here are some of the comments to show much these women valued their relationships with their mentors:

1. My mentor was [her mentor]. She was a campus leader who maintained academic excellence and a realistic sense of humor about life which she used to relate to others and gain their trust; it is a skill unique to her. In essence, she created a leadership style as an extension of herself and an ability to balance her personal development with the growth of organizations. She maintained low stress, planned ahead, and brought quality to every task she performed. Little did I know, but her mentorship was the beginning of a long-lasting, mutually giving friendship. During the first phase, I learned about my ability to connect with people, my methodical approach to task implementation, and my ability to easily absorb knowledge and communicate effectively. (Kaylin, Interview)
2. I have also learned a lot from the other advisors and mentors in my life. I truly believe that if I had gone to a different school and not been able to work with the people that I did, in and out of the [Research Site Leadership Program], that I would not have been such an authentic leader with a thirst to

learn more, grow more, challenge myself more, and continue to help others grow. (Grace, Senior Legacy Paper)

3. My mentors and advisors really get me to think about ‘What does this mean to you?’ and ‘How does this make you feel?’ and I think through all of the different leadership experiences. My advisors started off on the self-reflection challenge and that has become more natural to me after the program in GA as well. We did a lot of self-reflection in the [Research Site Leadership Program] and workshops. When I came to [her university], I was pretty aware of who I was, and had the confidence piece, but the encouragement of self-reflection really helped to establish who I was in the 4 years. (Grace, Interview)
4. I think a lot of it was just by example, maybe, just watching, like how the leaders at [her university] worked you know like, so the head of the leadership program, how they interacted with us, they interacted with us on a more of a relational, and my experience was better because of it because I was more open to their suggestions and their criticism because it was like I was talking to a friend, someone who knew me or wanted to know me and tried to know me, also the way information was presented. Nothing was in isolation. The idea is to be a follower and follow the model because it does empower people. It wasn’t just giving you a template and say to follow it and giving you guidelines and say follow your objective, then you need to tailor it in some way, and having that flexibility because the leadership program helped me a lot. Again, that was the whole mentality was mimicked throughout the institution, even in your classes and your work study program, I had the same feelings. (Kaylin, Interview)

Serving as mentors to other students. Once the women reached a certain point in their leadership identity during their college leadership journeys, they felt the importance of serving as mentors to other students. Stage five of the LID model, “Generativity,” is where students look beyond themselves and express a passion and commitment for the welfare of others such as peace, justice, and serving others. This is where these students can make a contribution to the future of their organizations by guiding other students in leadership when they act as role models and mentors for younger students and work with peer leaders on campus. Some students learn to mentor

new members, set up structures for mentoring, help other students identify their personal passions and commitments, help other students examine their goals, and teach other students to see the perspectives of the groups they inhabit. Every single participant in this study discussed in her legacy paper the ways in which they were making a contribution to the future of their organizations and guiding other students in leadership. Involvement gave them a desire to give back, serve, improve, mentor, and grow as leader. Some of their comments on serving as mentors or role models include:

1. A leader understands the common goal being achieved and is willing to play the role necessary for achieving those goals. Therefore, by understanding how to follow, the leader becomes a mentor to inexperienced leaders, providing them the opportunity to develop their skills. (Kaylin, Sophomore Legacy Paper)
2. When I left [her university], my view of a leader had the aspect of being a mentor or being a few years older and hopefully having more knowledge. I wanted to share that knowledge and help with the transition. I think I didn't have that when I was a leader my first year and I think that came with age and experience and has changed my view of that and what I think of as a leader. (Grace, Interview)
3. One thing I did was to include them (Officers of DDD sorority) in the process of creating programs and leading discussions. I drew on their past experiences to show them how they could lead the younger officers into this new phase in our chapter. (Haley, Junior Legacy Paper)
4. I have really enjoyed being an older member of the program (Leadership Program) and serving as a role model for younger members of the program. (Haley, Junior Legacy Paper)

Breadth of involvement. Breadth of involvement emerged as a theme in the legacy papers of five of the six women. They all felt that narrowing down volume of

involvement would allow them to focus on the things they were more passionate about and that they could be more effective this way.

1. I don't always have to be the leader and I'm just as effective as a follower, whereas before I kind of always thought I had to be super involved in everything and that kind of thing. (Haley, Interview)
2. I would say the leadership program and all of these things helped me to choose wisely I guess, if you really aren't going to be able to put 100% into it, cost of time or money, then it's not worth it. So I think again the idea of quality within the leadership program taught me to choose wisely, what do you really want to commit to? I think things come from resume builders to a reflection of who I am. (Kaylin, Interview)
3. One only has so much time and I only want to be spending time in areas that I am most passionate about. I feel that this year I have strengthened my goal setting skills and time management as well, which I have found are vital for leaders. (Jillian, Freshman Legacy Paper)
4. My schoolwork has suffered a little bit and that is something I need to look at next year. I am considering cutting out a few organizations so I can devote more time to my work. (Grace, Freshman Legacy Paper)
5. First semester [Junior Year], we focused on personal change and I decided I wanted to take more time for myself. While my quest to calm things down a bit mostly failed, in some ways it was good because I wore myself thin until I became so tired. Now that I am exhausted, I realize what is really important and I now focus all of my energy on those few things. (Taylor, Junior Legacy Paper)

Summary: Research Question 3

The participants conveyed many reasons, through their college leadership program documents as well as in the interviews, that they felt that Experiential Learning had a positive impact on the acquisition and growth in their leadership identity. Other than the positive impact of Experiential Learning, three other themes of influence on leadership identity emerged—relationships, mentors, and breadth of involvement

appeared in the data for this study. For these women, relationships consisted both of peer students in their leadership programs or in organizations they led or in Study Abroad trips and Faculty and Staff Mentors and Advisors. These relationships seemed to kindle the confidence that leads to leadership identity. These women also discussed breadth of involvement due in large part to the schedules these students had while trying to get an education, finish the degree, volunteer their time in service, lead organizations, study abroad, work with the community, participate in Internships, and eat and sleep. In fact, several participants mentioned in their legacy papers that they had to narrow down their involvement in order to focus and be more effective in what they were passionate about. These meanings will be discussed in Chapter V.

Finally, all of the women in this study felt an even stronger need to make a difference, not only in their individual organizations but in the community as well and in society and in some cases, in the world as a whole. There were two surprising themes that emerged that I felt warranted mention. The women in this study were aware and conscious of what other people thought of them and they also were aware of reaching and surpassing goals in their service and leadership work.

Other Emerging Themes

Surprising Themes

There were two surprising themes in this study that may point out topics for future research or may be coincidental, but nonetheless shall be mentioned as emerging themes from this study. One surprising theme was the students' desire to surpass goals. I kept seeing mention of this in their legacy papers. I believe these women, in their efforts

to make a difference, must have been trying so diligently to do so that they gave it all they had and with that hard work and commitment, they went so far as to surpass the goals they had originally set. The following comments show examples of this:

1. We were one of the most successful groups ('Do You Have Sole' service project). We raised over 270 some pairs of shoes and \$1000 and it was a great experience because we worked really well together and had a lot of fun and got done what we needed to get done and surpassed our goals. (Haley, Interview)
2. The Ballroom Club began as an organization for the shy and turned up their confidence through the delegation of tasks, invested responsibility and effort increases value, and through competitions by increasing skill sets empowers people to do it themselves. (Kaylin, Senior Legacy paper) I applied my leadership skills to my organization and to improving an organization that may have been failing at first and is now doing really well. Now the Ballroom is winning awards in different places. I hear they are doing pretty good there at [her university]. (Kaylin, Interview)
3. I definitely faced challenges (DanceMarathon), mostly at the event, which can get very hard once you have been awake for 20+ hours. But the successes outweighed the bad tenfold. Our goal was to raise \$50,000 and we smashed the goal by raising over \$117,000 and counting! Knowing that all the money will go towards saving a child's life and easing a family's burden is worth every second of work I put in and every challenge I faced. (Taylor, Sophomore Legacy Paper)
4. I believe that servant leadership is key, which comes in relating to and working with one's followers as well as setting the example and meeting or exceeding the standards. (Jillian, Sophomore Legacy Paper)
5. The only difference is that I guess I hold myself on a higher standard. When I say I am in Emerging Leaders I feel like I am saying I have a certain GPA, am involved in a certain number of organizations, volunteer a certain number of hours a week, and always follow the rules. (Alyssa, Freshman Legacy Paper)

Another surprising theme that appeared in this study is “What Other People Think of Me.” Some of the women learned to be confident in their decisions even if the decisions were not popular and to not feel the need to be liked by everyone in their group.

1. I think definitely, I feel like I grew a lot from freshman year to my senior year, and everything that I learned allowed me to be more confident in my leadership, and not really doubt, you know, am I doing the right thing, do people like me, enable me to have that confidence in what I was doing. (Haley, Interview)
2. I feel as though I have become a different person in my ability to think through all aspects of a situation and really think about the dynamics of a group and what is the best solution for a challenge, even though it may not be the most popular decision. (Grace, Senior Legacy Paper)
3. Through leadership I learned that people will and will not like you (or even pretend to like you), but leading is not about being liked, it’s about producing quality in everything you do. It is the best representation for you, and the only time emotions enter into a professional setting is when the human needs and situations enter the lives of organizational members. I learned that you impact people even when you least expect it. (Kaylin, Senior Legacy Paper)

However, not all of the women reached this conclusion. Both Jillian and Taylor mentioned difficulties in this area. Jillian was bothered that others might not recognize or value her contributions.

Another area of struggle in my leadership roles came with being in undefined roles. During my time at the Oaks I ended up in a role which many co-workers did not understand; this caused a large amount of extra stress on me. It was very hard for me to be working so hard but then to feel like people thought I was not doing anything, only because they did not know why I was there and what I was doing. I am not big on getting recognition. I prefer to work behind the scenes, however, I needed the dignity and respect of those I was working with. Though these experiences were hard, I know they will help me in future roles. (Jillian, Sophomore Legacy Paper)

Taylor recognized that her concern about what others thought might get in her way.

When it comes to conflict resolution, I have a really hard time confronting people. I have always been a ‘people-pleaser’ and I hate to address issues, especially if they are touchy. (Taylor, Sophomore Legacy Paper)

Conclusion

The findings from research question one reveal that the overarching theme in how students describe their understanding of leadership is from that of a central positional leader who bosses people around to shared, collaborative, relational, group oriented leadership in a non-positional role. The findings did support movement through the stages of the Leadership Identity Development (LID) model during the participants’ college careers and that Experiential Learning contributed to the process.

The findings for research question two reveal that there were self-reported leadership outcomes that the participants attributed to Experiential Learning along with the leadership outcomes from the Social Change model. The self-reported leadership outcomes that emerged from this study were Confidence, Appreciation for Diversity, the Continual Desire to Serve and Give Back, the Continual Desire to Make a Difference or Improve, Evaluate/Change Career Path, Self-Awareness, Collaboration and Shared Leadership, a Continual Desire to Grow as a Leader, Professional Skill Sets, a Better Understanding of Leadership, a Continued Desire for Involvement, and Communication skills. All six participants pointed out that Experiential Learning and the leadership program helped all six participants with all five of the “group” outcomes of the Social

Change Model (SCM) which are Change, Collaboration, Common Purpose, Consciousness of Self, and Controversy with Civility. Experiential Learning did provide some contribution to the “individual” outcomes for SCM: Commitment for Kaylin, Grace, Alyssa, and Taylor; to Citizenship for Grace, Alyssa, and Taylor, and to Congruence for Taylor. The findings show that the Experiential Learning and the leadership program have more impact on the “group” outcomes than “individual” components.

The findings for research question three reveal that the participants felt that Experiential Learning had a positive impact on the acquisition and growth in their leadership identity. They also believed that mentors and relationships, along with breadth of involvement, played a part in their leadership identity as well.

Finally, two surprise findings in the study that warranted mention. First, all of the women in this study felt an even stronger need to make a difference, not only in their individual organizations but in the community as well and in society and in some cases, in the world as a whole. Secondly, the women in this study were aware and conscious of what other people thought of them and they also were aware of reaching and surpassing goals in their service and leadership work.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

This chapter will review the purpose of the study, research methodology, and the summary and significance of the findings. This will be followed with implications for practice in higher education leadership education as well as limitations of the study and recommendations for future research.

The purpose of this study was to gain a clearer understanding of how Experiential Learning facilitates leadership identity among female college students. Previous research has focused on the leadership development of White males primarily and has not examined the Experiential Learning component of a college education with regard to leadership outcomes. The findings for this study will be presented by answering each research question directly. The research questions used for this study were as follows:

1. How do recent female college graduates perceive their own leadership identity?
2. How do recent female college graduates describe their participation in Experiential Learning during college?
3. When considering the acquisition of and growth in leadership identity, what undergraduate experiences are meaningful for recent female college graduates?

The methodology of the study consisted of a qualitative research paradigm in order to analyze the change in participants' understanding of leadership, the meaning they make of their Experiential Learning, their perceptions of their own leadership identity, and the relationships they see between their Experiential Learning and their leadership identity. Most studies on leadership in higher education use a quantitative approach with leadership survey instruments. In order to address these shortcomings, I sought to uncover women's perceptions of their own leadership identity and of leadership outcomes gained through their Experiential Learning during college. Data for this study were triangulated using the participants' four year-end legacy papers they wrote during their college years and the material I obtained through phone interviews.

The findings of this study include a number of significant points. First, this study examined female college students' leadership identity through self-reported leadership outcomes. Studies in higher education leadership development to date either have focused on the educational needs of men or have assumed that the needs of men and women are the same; these studies have not examined leadership outcomes in women. This assumption is problematic because women tend to approach leadership differently in that they rely more on collaboration, relationships, and shared power and less on confidence in leadership and they have perceptions of leadership as more non-positional than positional (Cress et al., 1991; Engbers, 2006; Kezar & Moriarty, 2000; Komives et al., 1998; Romano, 1996; Shertzer & Schuh, 2004). Second, this study examined the leadership identity of female college graduates two years post-graduation to see if they continued to be leaders outside the undergraduate college environment and how they

perceive themselves as leaders post-graduation. Existing literature addresses leadership development of college students, but what happens after graduation has been relatively unknown. Third, this study examined what components of the students' learning in college contributed to their leadership identity. Studies also have focused on leadership theory and skill-sets, but few have considered Experiential Learning as an approach to promoting leadership identity. The relative absence of Experiential Learning merits attention because Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) has been shown to transform experience into knowledge for students who can then use the knowledge for individual and collective development therefore linking education, work, and personal development (Kolb, 1984). Few studies have shown how the various types of individual and group activities and patterns of student involvement across multiple experiences affect leadership identity. This is critical because it would address which education experiences best serve student leadership identity development.

Summary of Findings

Research Question 1

How do recent female college graduates perceive their own leadership identity?

This study considered the meanings that female college graduates assigned to their leadership identity after completing a four-year college leadership program. The female graduates who participated in this study described strong leader behaviors and placed emphasis on collaborative, shared leadership, with confidence in their leadership abilities as a result of their Experiential Learning during their college years.

Komives et al. (2005) proposed a six-stage process, the LID model, in which students construct a leadership identity. I used this model to further explore how the students in this study moved through the leadership identity stages. The findings strongly support the conceptual model; furthermore, the findings provide evidence that the Experiential Learning helped students move through the stages of leadership identity development.

All of the participants in this study (100%) identified their growth moments in leadership as times they were involved in Experiential Learning. Five of the six participants reported their memorable growth moment in leadership occurred when they held an Undergraduate Leadership position. One participant reported her growth moment in leadership to be when she was working on a senior project in Service.

Research Question 2

How do recent female college graduates describe their participation in Experiential Learning during college?

This study considered the perceptions of the students' Experiential Learning's influence on their leadership identity. Types of Experiential Learning considered included holding leadership positions, studying abroad, and participating in Service Learning, community service, and Internships. Experiential Learning is a growing phenomenon in higher education and has proven to have positive effects on leadership identity (Dugan, 2006b). Undergraduate Leadership, Study Abroad, Volunteer Service, and Internships did have a positive impact on these students' leadership identity and did

appear to help the students move through the stages of the LID model. However, there was little, if any, evidence that Service Learning offered contribution.

When looking at Experiential Learning in this study, I examined what the participants said were the most important impacts of their experiences and then further probed for leadership outcomes in the SCM Model. The self-reported leadership outcomes that emerged from this study were Appreciation for Diversity, the Continual Desire to Serve and Give Back, a Continual Desire to Make a Difference or Improve, and Evaluate/Change Career Path; all six participants discussed how their involvement in Experiential Learning had a positive influence over their leadership identity in the areas of these four learning outcomes. The next most reported outcomes were Confidence, Self-Awareness, Collaboration and Shared Leadership, a Continual Desire to Grow as a Leader, and Professional Skill sets, a Better Understanding of Leadership, a Continual Desire for Involvement, and Communication Skills.

With regard to SCM, Experiential Learning had “group” level leadership outcomes (Change, Collaboration, Common Purpose, Consciousness of Self, and Controversy with Civility) for all of the participants in the study. Most of the participants shared they brought the “individual” qualities (Citizenship, Commitment, and Congruence) with them as they entered college. The few who reported positive influence on the “individual” components made mention that the Experiential Learning either strengthened these areas or gave them a venue to show their strengths.

Undergraduate Leadership proved to be the most effective type of Experiential Learning to move students toward leadership identity. All six students in this study

participated in Undergraduate Leadership, so all outcomes disclosed in Chapter IV could be attributed to this component of the leadership program. When asked their most meaningful leadership experiences, five of the six participants referred specifically to leadership positions that they held. The sixth woman considered her internship while studying abroad to be the most meaningful of her leadership experiences. Undergraduate Leadership made a positive contribution to self-reported leadership outcomes for every participant and to the tested Social Change Model leadership outcomes for every participant.

Volunteer Service proved to be another effective type of Experiential Learning when considering the acquisition of and growth in leadership identity development in college students. All six students in this study participated in Volunteer Service. All six participants reported areas of growth in their leadership identity through Volunteer Service. Three of the participants went into Services roles upon college graduation. Alyssa served in CityYear for one year working with a group providing food at homeless shelters, along with painting and working in community gardens in Washington, DC. Jillian worked with leaders in international ministries in Lebanon through a non-profit organization. Taylor is a liaison with the Children's Miracle Network today. Participants articulated that Service is a large part of leadership:

1. I do think that part of leadership is that service component, part of being a leader is showing the group that you are working with that it is about the group and the community whether it be the [her university] community or the outside community and about how the group affects the community and about how the community affects the group. (Grace, Interview)

2. Something that has been the greatest thing I've learned in college is how to be a servant. I think to be a good leader you must be a good server and I do everything I can to give back to others. The more I take on leadership positions, the more I develop my serving skills and passion to help others. (Taylor, Junior Legacy Paper)

Study Abroad appeared to be another effective type of Experiential Learning with regard to student leadership identity. The following comments from three women point out the leadership value they received from the travel experiences:

1. My life in Costa Rica brought many changes in everyday life, views, relationships, and experiences. One thing I know is that life is all about change! There are some incredible animals in the rainforests of Costa Rica, and plants too, that learn to change according to their environment (due to climate, predators, disturbances, etc...). In life, I want to be like one of these species that learns to adapt, change and improve! I could not be happier that I will continue to change throughout my life and that as a human I hold great power with the ability to initiate change in this world. (Jillian, Senior Legacy Paper)
2. The skill sets I gained and the exposure so obviously with the international Study Abroad Internship, the exposure to the culture to living in a different area to being able to immerse myself into the daily culture that was very important to the part of myself that requires adapting so being able to adapt to different situations, sometimes stressful situations, and being able to assimilate appropriately in a different area, so that was the biggest outcome of that program. (Kaylin, Interview)
3. I absolutely loved it. It completely changed my life! It was a really eye-opening experience and it really enabled me to achieve something that I wanted to achieve since middle school really. It just really opened my eyes to, like, there were other avenues in life. I was looking for other avenues than just going to law school. I was never really nailed down to law school but it was a path that I was heading down and even that I still ended up going to law school, I was glad that I looked at other things and really took it seriously and just growing up wise - I feel that being there really helped me grow up. (Haley, Interview)

Internships showed positive impact on students' leadership identity. Internships helped the students examine and re-evaluate career paths and even caused change in career paths for four of the women in this study.

These out-of-classroom experiences—Undergraduate Leadership, Volunteer Service, Study Abroad, and Internships—instilled confidence in leadership identity in these women and contributed to their appreciation for diversity. The experiences contributed to the understanding that leadership can be shared and collaborative rather than that of a central position with power and autonomy. This supports the work of other researchers who claim that women learn leadership best and gain confidence to lead best when working in a shared, collaborative environment (Calizo et al., 2007; Dugan, 2006a; Kezar & Moriarty, 2000; Sax, 2008; Whitt, 1994).

Service Learning, a pedagogy that combines the concrete experience of community service with reflection observation, which is the academic instruction focusing on critical, reflective thinking, was not reported as a component that aided in any leadership outcomes or to have any impact on the leadership identity of the participants in this particular study. The literature review concluded that there was insufficient accounting for the contribution of Service Learning to leadership. This is supported in this study due to the fact that no mention of Service Learning was made by participants when asked about which college experiences made a difference in their leadership acquisition and growth or for any outcomes. This could mean that Service Learning does not really add value or contribution to leadership identity. It also could mean that other opportunities were more popular in this particular university or more

specifically in this leadership program; several participants were a little unclear on whether or not they had participated in Service Learning courses so that might be part of why Service Learning did not show positive impact. It also may be that the learning experiences in the other components of Experiential Learning were more powerful or more obvious for these participants. It is possible that courses identified as “service learning courses” did not effectively employ Service Learning/Experiential Learning pedagogy. Alternatively, perhaps Service Learning is helpful as a building block or framework for students but not as transcending boundaries for them to follow their passions in all cases. It may be more of a way to learn the content of a course that helps them develop skills they will use later to affect positive change or that makes them want to go and do something else. The goal of the Service Learning department is not to develop leadership identity; therefore, the Service Learning department could be effective without having an impact on leadership identity development.

Research Question 3

When considering the acquisition of and growth in leadership identity, what undergraduate experiences are meaningful for recent female college graduates?

Undergraduate experiences impact on leadership identity. As a case study, this research was not conducted to draw generalizable conclusions about the perfect leadership development program. The purpose was to aim for an in-depth exploration of a specific phenomenon in its context: how female college graduates make meaning of their Experiential Learning in college and its impact on their leadership identity. This

study also attempted to test the LID model to see if Experiential Learning makes a difference in how students go from stage to stage in this model.

The findings show the importance of having the Experiential Learning component to the acquisition of and growth in leadership identity because it provided students an opportunity to test ideas and theories (Theory to Practice) and to have revelation of what did or did not work in the application (Reflection). It allowed the students to experiment with new approaches, methods, and techniques; learn how to work with people and groups; learn how to deal with change and lead in different situations; as well as to gain confidence. For some, it showed what type of working environment they want to work in, caused them to evaluate their career paths, and in some cases, even changed their career paths. The application of leadership allowed them to follow their passions and in some, even instilled the desire to serve, give back, improve, stay involved, make a difference, and continue to grow as a leader. It taught the students how to deal firsthand with the inevitable in life, change, through real life experiences and for some students, it taught them how to ask the right questions and challenge the process in order to make improvements. Finally, as previous research shows, women tend to learn better through hands on experience; this may be because women tend to attach value to relationships and experiences that engage them with other people (Belenky et al., 1986).

Other contributing factors to leadership identity—Relationships, mentors, and mentoring. In addition to Experiential Learning, these women reported that relationships, mentors, and serving as mentors increased their leadership identity as well. Research has shown that women's sense of self is related to being able to make and

maintain relationships (Gilligan, 1982). This may lend insight to the findings that women tend to prefer more collaborative styles of leadership (Boatwright & Egidio, 2003; Kezar & Moriarty, 2000; Northouse, 2001). Five out of the six participants made specific reference to their relationships with mentors who made a difference in their leadership growth. These women made mention of relationships in every type of their Experiential Learning and how valuable these relationships were to them in their leadership growth. The relationships consisted of working with their mentors in administration, their peers in the leadership program, and with the students for whom they served as mentors.

General Discussion and Overview

The LID model suggests that students move through the six stages of Awareness,” “Exploration/Engagement,” “Leader Identified,” “Leadership Differentiated,” “Generativity,” and “Integration/Synthesis” while developing leadership identity (Komives et al., 2005). The findings of this study provide support for the LID model; I could clearly see the women going through the various stages when looking at the four year-end documents for each participant. Students changed their perceptions of themselves as leaders as they deepened their self-awareness, gained self-confidence, established interpersonal efficacy, and learned to apply new skills sets in their real-world experiences. Similarly, they grew as leaders through their engagement in groups and from the feedback they received from group members and from mentors and advisors. This interaction between “developing self” and “group influences” helped shape the students’ awareness of who they were in relation to others. Depending on their stage in the LID model, these students saw themselves as “dependent on others” (Stages 1 and 2),

“independent from others” (Stage 3), or “interdependent with those around them” (Stages 4, 5, and 6). Their “changing view of self with others” had a direct bearing on their “broadening view of leadership” where they saw leadership as a non-positional, relational process with leaders being anyone in the group who contributed to that process (Komives et al., 2005).

I believe that Experiential Learning helped students move through the stages of the LID model in different ways. One vivid example is movement from Stage 2, “Exploration/Engagement” to Stage 3, “Leader Identified.” These students moved from being “dependent on others” to being “independent from others” as they started taking on leadership roles and applying the theories they had learned in classes and workshops. Komives et al. (2006) conveyed that relating to diverse peers was essential to interpersonal skill development in Stage 3. All six participants in the study reported “Appreciation for Diversity” as an outcome from their Experiential Learning, whether from Undergraduate Leadership, Study Abroad, or Internships. The LID model is framed on Developmental Influences, Developing Self, Group Influences, Changing View of Self with Others, and Broadening View of Leadership. “Confidence” was another top leadership outcome in this study, along with “group” outcomes of SCM; Experiential Learning outcomes are aligned with LID.

This study adds to the LID model by illuminating the process by which this group of women made the pivotal transition from Stage 3, “Leader Identified,” to Stage 4, “Leader Differentiated”; this was the stage transition that Komives et al. (2006) said that we know least about. I examined the students’ reflection papers at the end of their

freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior years to see which phases they were moving through during each academic year and to try to ascertain if the Experiential Learning helped them reach new stages of leadership identity. I found clear examples in each participant's data for how the opportunity to practice in real life situations prompted that transition.

The key transition from stage three to four is facilitated by teaching the language of leadership, helping students learn the contributions others make to group process and to value diverse styles and ideas, and encouraging students to reflect on what they used to think leadership was (object) and what it is to them now (subject). Reflecting with students on their incongruities promotes the transition. (Komives et al., 2006, p. 416)

The particular leadership program in this study may have accelerated the transition to Stage 4 by having the students constantly reflecting upon their leadership experiences as they submitted their legacy papers each year and by having raised awareness of the importance of reflection in the leadership identity process. Stage 4 is where students learn that leaders cannot make everything happen and people in groups work interdependently in the process of leadership. They differentiated their view of leadership and saw it as not only what an individual did as a positional leader, but also saw leadership being exhibited by nonpositional members of the group. This stage is where students in positional roles of leadership sought to engage in shared, more participative leadership. Once the students reached Stage 4, they continued a consciousness of the interdependence of themselves with others across the final stages of their leadership identity. They believed that leadership came from anywhere in the group

and worked to develop their own and their peers' capacity for leadership as they moved through Stage 5.

This study also adds insight to Stage 6. The Komives et al. (2005) study was conducted with undergraduate students, so they did not look at students past college graduation, which is where they predicted that Stage 6 occurred. “As a potential life span model, more research is needed to determine how postcollege adults experience the integration/synthesis stage of leadership identity and whether there are additional stages not reflected in this theory” (Komives et al., 2005, p. 610). All of the women in this study have carried their leadership identity into the world past undergraduate college education into their graduate school programs and career as they continue leadership and service. Stage 6 of the LID can be seen clearly in the leadership journeys of these participants.

Students in this study appeared to move into Stage 6 in a more timely manner than what the LID model projects, perhaps due to the reflection component of Experiential Learning. “At best, students may be only starting to move into stage six as they end their college careers. Indeed, the prospect of anticipating graduation may facilitate this stage as students think about transitioning from an educational context. Capstone courses and activities that help students reflect on a congruent sense of self may help their leadership identity solidify” (Komives et al., 2006, p. 418). The quicker arrival at Stage 6 in this study might be due to the students being in an intensive, structured leadership program, or even from being in such an engagement-rich environment. Four out of six participants in this study indicated that they began looking

to Stage 6 early in their college careers (Sophomore year for Kaylin, Jillian, and Grace; Junior year for Haley; and Senior year for Alyssa and Taylor).

The opportunity to put “theory into practice” and “reflect” upon the experiences were very meaningful to the women in the study with regard to their leadership identity development; I believe this instilled leadership in such a way that it will be continual rather than just learning about leadership theories in a classroom. Dewey's theory of experience (Neill, 2005) rests on two central tenets, continuity and interaction.

Continuity refers to the idea that from every experience a person learns something that is carried into the future; interaction builds on the notion of continuity by explaining the way past experience interacts with the present situation to create one's present experience. In this way, learning through real-life application had an impact on the women in this study as they truly learned how to be a leader in different environments and were able to carry this learning through these experiences into their lives after college. For example, when asked about what components added to her leadership identity from what she learned in class versus what she learned during her experiences, Haley's comment showed that she carried her real-life college application of leadership with her as she entered graduate school:

Definitely both. You need both. This is where the law school leadership program has a downfall. You need both classroom and the application. You have to teach people the theory but then you have to have people go out and do the theory and reflect on how they used the theory. It's not going to be useful if they're not required to go out and use it; you have to have both. (Haley, Interview)

Experiential Learning, for these students, appeared to be so powerful because it provided opportunities for “Theory to Practice” and for “Reflection” that allowed the women to grow from the experiences. It gave provision for group settings, which promoted SCM leadership outcomes. It put the women in contact with powerful mentors and provided opportunities for them to serve as mentors to other students. It promoted the collaborative, shared, non-positional idea of leadership. It helped these women to see that they could be leaders and helped them build the confidence so they can go out into the world and become leaders beyond college graduation.

In Kaylin’s junior year-end paper, she identified the importance of bringing theory into actual experiences:

Phase III provided an understanding of how to apply the theory of leadership to a project in order to facilitate progressive change. (Kaylin, Junior Legacy Paper)

Haley’s comments on putting theory into practice were:

I really liked having the change projects to work on while learning specific theories and ideas for dealing with change because I had a direct experience in applying what we learned. (Haley, Junior Legacy Paper)

I personally don’t think just sitting in the classroom and learning academically how to be a better leader works on its own. You have to practice it. You can definitely learn it but part of that learning is going out and doing it. (Haley, Interview)

Grace valued real world experience and reflection:

It was nice to see a real world experience of all of the things that we learned in the workshops and Lead Labs. (Grace, Sophomore Legacy Paper)

It will be good to take a Common Good project and really give back to the community while reflecting on the last three years of leadership and lessons. (Grace, Junior Legacy Paper)

Like I said you have to get out there and have the experiences. You can't learn about leadership through a book. I mean you can start there but you have to get out there and see what to do, um, so who I am, because as a leader, I don't think I could have learned any of that without having the experiences. (Grace, Interview)

Jillian noted the importance of the experiences and of reflection. She talked about her different areas of growth in her understanding and application of leadership, which came through:

I would say experiences and reflection. My time at the Oaks was really good. I also learn by experience. We had a lot of weird dynamics and you're living with these people all the time, so it was a mix of dynamics on people as a team. So I learned a lot about dynamics. I think a lot that helped with that learning was the reflection on the experiences [more of Study Abroad and Internship along with Leadership]. (Jillian, Interview)

I believe I have matured a lot as a person and in my plans for my future especially through my time working at The Oaks in England. These different areas of growth have without a doubt affected my understanding and application of leadership, mostly in the area of collaboration. This has come through a lot of personal reflection, classes, discussion, jobs I've held, and new experiences I have been fortunate enough to have. (Jillian, Sophomore Legacy Paper)

Alyssa had a nice way of explaining the personal reflection:

My personal leadership philosophy is that you can observe the world around you but you must process it internally to interpret it for yourself. A leader isn't necessarily the one with the loudest voice or the most followers, but to me, a leader is someone who sticks to their convictions and allows their convictions to mature them, and like a fine sculpture, becomes chiseled into a masterpiece. (Alyssa, Senior Legacy Paper)

Although Experiential Learning was an important component in what helped these women develop leadership identity, the women reported that the relationships in these experiences played a big role. Relationships have been shown to be an important part of women's overall identity development (Foubert et al., 2005; Gilligan, 1982; Straub, 1987; Taub, 1995). I believe the existence of close adult relationships helped facilitate leadership identity development for most of the participants in this study. The shift to the LID fourth stage appears to correspond with Chickering's (Chickering & Reisser, 1993) vectors of "developing mature interpersonal relationships" and "establishing identity" (Komives et al., 2006, p. 413).

Four of the five types of Experiential Learning examined in this study, Undergraduate Leadership, Volunteer Service, Study Abroad, and Internships, made a positive contribution to the women's collaboration skills. Previous research has found that women tend to prefer more collaborative styles of leadership (Boatwright & Egidio, 2003; Kezar & Moriarty, 2000; Northouse, 2001). Collaboration and shared efforts are important to women with regard to leadership. Whitt (1994) noted that women have preferred participative leadership styles with emphasis on relationships, collaboration and community, and the sharing of information and power. These concepts of women's sense of self being tied to relationships and women's desire for collaborative leadership were strongly supported in this study.

The people who served as mentors for these women played critical roles in their leadership growth. Although I did not have "mentors" as a probe in any part of the interview protocol, the participants repeatedly commented and credited their leadership

identity in part to the relationships they had with their mentors. Their mentors, for the most part, were women. This is not a surprise because the women mentors also see leadership and “do leadership” in collaborative, relationship based, shared environments. It may be that it is particularly important for young women to see other women in leadership roles as they develop their leadership identity. Howard-Hamilton and Ferguson (1998) found that having several female mentors significantly enhanced college women student leaders’ leadership practices and recommended the provision of more female role models and mentors for college women.

The surprise finding that women care and worry about what others think of them supports the work of Romano (1996), who examined perceptions of women leaders on campus and found that the lack of peer acceptance can be a deterrent to women student leaders and that some women experience subtle forms of discrimination during college such as not being taken seriously. She found that family members and role models had an effect on initial and continuous involvement in women’s Undergraduate Leadership programs and that observing and emulating behaviors of peer leaders improved leadership skills in women.

The central vector of Chickering’s psychosocial identity development theory (Chickering & Reisser, 1993) is “Establishing Identity.” One component of this vector is “Sense of Self in Response to Feedback from Valued Others.” Chickering and Reisser described it:

We define who we are in part by discovering who we respect, how they feel about us, and how to deal with reactions that do not confirm our self-image. . . . When we are clarifying identity by trying out new roles, we may do so with warm

support from others or in spite of their contempt. While acclaim may make life easier, following our star in the face of others' resistance can also build character. (p. 198)

Four participants in the current study expressed lack of confidence or concern for what others thought in their legacy papers early in the leadership program, as they were, as Chickering and Reisser put it, "trying out new roles" (p. 198). Lack of confidence may be what causes women to take what others think into consideration when stepping up to lead. Experiential Learning in college provides a platform for women to practice leadership and gain confidence as supported by the findings of positive leadership identity outcomes gained for the women in this study. One participant even mentioned that she was more comfortable practicing leadership because she knew that she was in a safe place to do so. Jillian commented in her senior paper:

At [her university], I led in an arena where it was okay to fail, get up and try again, but it seems that failing after [her university] will be more serious. I have realized though that after [her university] I will fail time and time again, as a friend, an employee, a daughter, a wife, a mother. The key is, not preventing failure, but rather learning from my mistakes and being resilient and persistent. It has taken time to reflect on these things in order to regain my confidence in leading others. Not only have I regained some of my confidence, but I have been reminded of the urgent need there is today for leaders with integrity and strong character. (Jillian, Senior Legacy Paper)

Finally, when considering out-of-classroom involvement to be instrumental in Leadership Identity growth, breadth of involvement is an important factor. Breadth of involvement was mentioned by five of the women in their legacy papers. They all felt that narrowing down volume of involvement would allow them to focus on the things they were more passionate about and that they could be more effective this way.

Otherwise, the students felt too stretched and wouldn't have obtained the value they received from the experiences they did have. This is consistent with Chickering's 6th vector in the student development process, "Developing Purpose," where students intentionally assess interests and options, clarify goals, and make plans with regard to vocation, personal interests, and family commitments. College is an ideal place to experiment and entertain options but as students near the end of their college career, they must inevitably prioritize and narrow the pool so as to deepen their commitment in what is in alignment with the goals for their future (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Students must use their experiences and reflection to narrow their interests, and on a deeper level, identify life purposes and strengthen their commitment to those interests that provide them with a sense of their place in the larger whole and that will take them down that life journey.

Implications for Practice

The findings of this study may inform theory and practice. This study provides insight on leadership identity development in college women based on Experiential Learning in that it facilitates self development, group development, changing view of oneself, and a broadened view of leadership to include non-positional, shared, collaborative, relational leadership. College student leadership educators should find the results of this study useful in planning, designing, implementing, and assessing student leadership programs, particularly those involving an Experiential Learning component. Leadership programs should address the specific needs for every individual and group. Educators should be very diligent in identifying criteria in order to assess who the

intended program best serves and who it might exclude in leadership education, training, and development. These findings provide greater insight into student leadership development and provide improved leadership development opportunities for college women. Specifically, the findings of this study should enable college student educators to be more intentional in developing leadership identity among female undergraduates.

The Social Change Model of leadership (SCM) has existed for over a decade, yet very few studies (only two published in refereed journals) have attempted to operationalize the model despite its recognition as the most employed college student leadership model at that time (Kezar et al., 2006). Most research on college student leadership development is atheoretical, using general measures of leadership rather than those tied specifically to conceptual models designed for college students (Dugan, 2006b). The institution in this study frames its leadership development program on the SCM. Positive results from this leadership program were found for the “group” factors in this model while the participants were already strong in the “individual” factors before beginning college. The Experiential Learning component in this leadership program contributed strongly to the growth in these group components of this model. Therefore, using the SCM Model as a framework for this leadership program enabled students to reach success in leadership identity outcomes. This leadership program helped students move from Stage 3 to Stage 4 of the LID model through their experiences in either Undergraduate Leadership, Volunteer Service, Study Abroad, or Internships. Every participant in this study reached Stage 5, “Generativity,” by making a contribution to the future of their organizations and guiding other students in leadership when they acted as

role models and mentors for younger students, and worked with peer leaders on campus. There is a requirement for the particular institution's leadership program for each student to present her legacy to a review board upon completion of the program.

Leadership is a life-long process. The way to leadership identity is through developing student behaviors of engagement and reflection, translating theory to practice especially modeling leadership, allowing opportunities for students to see that they can lead, raising self-confidence, and by having them draw from the theories they learned in class when lacking confidence or experience. Again, incorporating the Experiential Learning was a good method to afford this opportunity for female students with lasting benefits. Placing minimum requirements for Experiential Learning in leadership programs can be accomplished without expensive investment on the part of colleges and universities. Asking students to be leaders in some type of club or organization on campus is a great way to transform theory into the practice of real life leadership. Students can participate in the other types of Experiential Learning to develop and strengthen other leadership abilities as well.

Limitations of the Study

A possible limitation to this study could be response bias. Because the students' four-year legacy papers for the leadership program were used as part of the data, it is possible that these students wrote their papers to be geared to what the Leadership Program staff member wanted to hear in order to give the illusion or to appear as if the students gained much from the program just to get a good grade. This is particularly key to the findings related to the SCM outcomes, since the program is explicitly modeled on

the SCM. However, I hope that the papers are genuine and accurate of the students' actual reflections at that particular period of time. Triangulating with the interviews conducted for this study adds credence to this interpretation. With the current goals of these students and what they are currently doing out in the world, I believe the reflection papers portray accurately their thoughts at the time they were written.

Another potential limitation in this study could be that the students were just reporting back content from the program; the program was comprised of four pillars: Change, Collaboration, Legacy, and the Common Good. There were certain themes that came through so clearly, which could possibly mean that the students disclosed finding of Change, Collaboration, and Stage 5 thinking because of what they were “taught” in the program rather than what they “experienced” in the program. These students did more than the program required during college with regard to Experiential Learning, and they are still doing it today. This supports the accuracy of the findings. Alyssa made a comment during her interview that spoke volumes on participation in Experiential Learning, whether required or not required:

It is essential—not just how I see myself as a leader, but in your college career, I feel sorry for the people who go through college and do no extra-curricular. They don't get engaged; they could just sit home and take on-line classes because they're not engaged. They're actually more engaged doing on-line classes because you have to work with other students on-line. Experiential learning is essential especially learning about yourself because you are defining who you are. Taking a lead role in an organization, stepping up to the plate doing those different things, getting out in community, humbling yourself, that always, especially with [her university] students are so privileged and drive nicer cars than the faculty, especially coming from a place you don't worry. You don't ever want to look at your Volunteer Service as a hand out. Trust me—you need them just as much as they need you and if you don't have that piece where you're forced to humble yourself or where you're forced to put yourself in someone else's shoes, then

you're missing out on who you are and what you're capable of. (Alyssa, Interview)

Four of the six women in the study reported a “Continual Desire for Involvement” today as a direct result of their Experiential Learning during college.

I worked 40 hours a week on that [Executive Board Entertainment Chair and Director of DanceMarathon] plus class plus everything else, especially my junior and senior years so it was a lot but it was definitely worth it especially when the event came around because I got to meet the miracle families from the Children's Hospital. I'm still involved. I'm the Dance Marathon Specialist for the State of Florida which means that, um, I travel all over the state and visit colleges and advise them so I'm the liaison between schools and the Children's Miracle Network Office. (Taylor, Interview)

A final limitation is that these six women may not be typical of the women who complete the [Research Site Leadership Program]. The fact that each of them volunteered her time to discuss the program with me may indicate that they were exceptionally involved in the program or that their outcomes were particularly profound. There was one participant who commented in her legacy papers on some negative group experiences in the leadership program and I wondered if she would be an outlier in the study but she ended up having the same leadership outcomes as the others in the study so that was not the case. She was one of the Skype interviews, and I did not notice any non-verbal signals that contradicted her words and would lead me to believe that her leadership outcomes were not positive.

Recommendations for Future Research

There are many possibilities for future research from this study. Future research could explore the impacts of Experiential Learning on leadership identity in men—would

they have the same outcomes and would mentors serve them well? Other possibilities would include (a) What happens next with the women in this study if we were to go on following them—do they go through more stages that are an extension of LID or are there more steps that we have not looked at? Do they recycle through stages but maybe at a higher level each time?, (b) Does the [Research Site Leadership Program] support and facilitate leadership faster for females in the leadership program when compared to other female student leaders who are not in the program?, (c) Are there differences between Fellows and Non-Fellows women in the program? Chapter III mentions the difference between Fellows (participated in both curricular and co-curricular components of the four-year program) and Non-Fellows (participated only in the co-curricular component of the four-year program), and (d) Did any ILCP students drop out of the program and if so, why did they get stuck in a stage and never get to the relational part? What is the leadership identity development trajectory of those students?

Conclusion

As discussed in Chapter II, the most common types of Experiential Learning in colleges and universities today were identified from the current research prior to this study as Service Learning, Volunteer Service, Internships, Study Abroad, and Undergraduate Leadership among others (ACPA, 2004; Astin & Astin, 2000; Dugan, 2006b). The findings of this study supported that four of these five styles of learning yield leadership identity in female college students. Few studies have focused on Experiential Learning as an approach to promoting leadership identity. Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) has been shown to transform experience into knowledge for

students who can then use the knowledge for individual and collective development therefore linking education, work, and personal development (Kolb, 1984). Dugan (2006b), for example, found that positional leadership roles, participation in student leadership training, student organization membership, and Community Service positively affected leadership development and suggested that further research was needed to distinguish between types of involvement. First, the findings from this study supported these contributory learning methods, Undergraduate Leadership and Volunteer Service, aided in the acquisition and growth of leadership identity as students matriculated through college, as well as two additional methods that emerged, Study Abroad and Internships.

Second, little is known about the long-term effects of Experiential Learning in college after graduation (Bialek & Lloyd, 1997). This study provided a means to look at the effects of students' Experiential Learning two years out past graduation with positive with definite confirmation that the Experiential Learning does make a difference; there is considerable agreement among all six participants that they are where they are today in education and/or career as a direct result of their collegiate leadership out-of-classroom experiences. This is particularly significant because it appears the experiences and reflection not only afforded the leadership learning outcomes needed to pass their courses and graduate, but instilled leadership identity in these women with lasting results. When asked to describe their most meaning type of Experiential Learning with regard to their leadership identity, the answers were not strikingly individual; five answered with some

form of Undergraduate Leadership and one responded that it was her Internship during Study Abroad.

Third, through semi-structured interviews, the researcher also identified further dimensions that are not reflected in the conceptual models of LID and ELT. Five of the six participants placed substantial importance on their mentors and on their role of serving as mentors to others, along with the Experiential Learning, with regard to their leadership growth. All six participants placed great value on relationships. These three themes (relationships, mentors, and serving as mentors) support the conceptualization of women's preference for collaborative leadership (Cress et al., 1991; Engbers, 2006; Kezar & Moriarty, 2000; Komives et al., 1998; Romano, 1996; Shertzer & Schuh, 2004).

The major findings for this study are that for the six students in this cohort in the same four years of college who went through this particular leadership program at this particular institution, according to what they self-reported, there is strong consistency in that Undergraduate Leadership, Study Abroad, Volunteer Service, and Internships did make a position contribution to the leadership identity in female college students. The direct link between Service Learning and leadership is still vague in the literature. The literature review concludes that there is insufficient support for a contribution of Service Learning to leadership; this study did not add any information to that particular component as I had no findings on this type of learning. This study did support the work of Komives et al. (2005) who emphasized students' movement through the various stages of the LID model when developing leadership identity. Participation in Experiential Learning did help move students through the "Leadership Differentiated," Stage 4 in the

LID Model, which supports the common theme of 'Shared Leadership' that these women have reported all throughout the study. This was the stage that Komives et al. (2006) reported about which we know the least. This study also supports the work of Kolb (1984) who claims that students, through application and reflection, transform their Experiential Learning into knowledge. Finally, this study showed that Experiential Learning does provide a strong, successful platform for leadership identity development.

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APPENDIX A

EMAIL SENT TO PARTICIPANTS

I. Email to Interviewees

For Ph.D. Candidate, Rhonda Belton
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro

I am on the staff at [my university] University and am working on a Ph.D. in Higher Education Administration at UNCG. I need to interview recent female [my university] graduates who participated in the [research site leadership program] for data to be used in my dissertation study. The purpose of the interview is to document perceptions of and acquisition of leadership identity/efficacy during college careers for recent female college graduates. The interview should take about an hour. The results will be used in my dissertation study at UNCG. If you would be willing to participate, please respond by email or feel free to call me at 336.278.5059 so that we can set up an appointment for the interview. We can do this by phone if you don't live near [my university site] at the current time. I am hoping to conduct the interviews during the months of November and December 2009.

Sincerely,

Rhonda Belton

APPENDIX B

LEGACY PAPERS OUTLINES

Emerging Leaders: Self (Paper at First Year-End)

- A. Learning Outcomes
 - 1. Personal style of leadership
 - 2. Effective time management
 - 3. Giving and receiving constructive feedback
 - 4. Goal setting and achievement
 - 5. Exercising ethics in leadership actions
 - 6. Emotional IQ
 - 7. [Research Site Leadership Program Founder]: her philosophy of leadership and her legacy to the university
- B. Personal Development
 - 1. Leader's ethic of service
 - ...
 - 2. Student involvement
 - ...
 - 3. Mentoring – upperclassmen leadership
 - ...
- C. Academic Relevance
 - ...
- D. Personal Development and Overall Evaluation
 - 1. How are you different as a result of your involvement in the program?
 - 2. What do you hope to gain from Phase II (Collaboration)?

Emerging Leaders: Collaboration (Paper at Second Year-End)

- A. Learning outcomes
 - 1. Team performance model
 - 2. Conflict resolution
 - 3. Building consensus
 - 4. Effective group communication
 - 5. Achieving synergy
 - 6. Learning to follow
 - 7. Resisting or saying no
- B. Personal Development
 - 1. Leadership Laboratory
 - 2. Phase II Retreat

- 3. Leadership Role
- C. Academic Relevance
- ...

D. Overall Evaluation

1. What is your philosophy of leadership and how has it changed as a result of your experiences in Phase II?
2. What skills have you developed in Phase II?
3. What do you hope to gain from Phase III (Change)?

Emerging Leaders: Change (Paper at Third Year-End)

A. Learning Outcomes

1. Mastering personal transition
2. Assessing current reality
3. Addressing restraining forces
4. Creating and sustaining organizational change
5. Who moved my cheese
6. Understanding of self based on TAIS

B. Personal Development

1. Change projects (personal and organizational)
2. Leadership Conference

C. Academic Relevance

...

D. Overall Evaluation

1. What is your personal philosophy/style of leadership and how has Phase III had an impact on it?
2. What skills have you developed as a result of the Phase III curriculum?
3. How do you plan on using those skills not only in Phase IV next year but throughout [research site university] and beyond?
4. What do you hope to gain from Phase IV (Common Good)?

Emerging Leaders: Common Good (Paper at Fourth Year-End)

A. Most Significant Leadership Experience

Write a brief sketch of your most significant leadership experience. Explain what organization it was with and the challenges that were presented to you. Identify the key actions you took and explain how your leadership knowledge through classes and the [research site leadership program] helped you in this experience.

B. Learning Objectives

Describe the challenges, successes, and setbacks in your efforts to fully understand self, collaboration, change, and common good through the [research site leadership program]. Identify the specific outcomes as a result of this, as well as any personal or organization challenges that were necessary in clarifying the objectives. Identify the extent of progress for both you and your organization. Apply the key learning objectives covered in Phase IV: personal transition, authenticity, integrity, ethical leadership, understanding externalities and evaluation change.

C. Personal Development

Describe the skills that you acquired or polished during this year. (ex. people skills, organizational skills, etc.) Describe the specific contributions you made. Identify the extent of your personal leadership growth.

Describe relevant materials such as the Campus/Climate Project, Capstone Dinners, or any other type of information you received throughout your phase experience that relates to you as a leader.

Describe your personal philosophy of leadership, including any changes that your [Research Site Leadership Program] experience has brought to your vision of how leaders and organizations relate. Describe specifically your leadership style and variety of leadership styles that an effective organization needs. Most importantly, how has your philosophy changed over the past four years?

D. Evaluation

End your reflection paper with an overall summary of your [research site leadership program] experience, as well as your specific Phase IV experience. Consider such questions as:

1. How have you as a person changed over the past four years at [research site university]?
2. How would your life be different if you did not join the [Research Site Leadership Program]?
3. What has the [Research Site Leadership Program] taught you about your life, leadership, and the future?
4. Do you feel more prepared for the future, leadership roles, and in dealing with others?
5. Please provide suggestions for improving the [Research Site Leadership Program].

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1. **Tell me about your experiential learning at [research site university].**
 Have you participated in the following during your undergraduate college career: If so, how often and for how long and in what class year?
 Service- Learning
 Internships
 Volunteer Service
 Undergraduate Leadership
 Study Abroad

 2. **Tell me all the reasons you chose to participate in these experiences in the first place?**

 Probes: (Was it your initial desire or was it required, friends and peers influence, what prompted to participate)

 3. **Did your experiential learning contribute to your feeling of leadership identity?**
 If so, in what ways?

 4. **What would you say were most important outcomes of your experiential learning participation?**

 5. Did your participation in your experiential learning contribute to any of the following outcomes? As I read through the list, please feel free to elaborate on any that we haven't discussed yet as an outcome if you can share how your experiential learning made a significant contribution to the outcome. I am also going to have you rank your top five and tell me how the experiential learning contributed to the outcome. (Tell me which contributed to the outcome - the leadership program or the experiential learning – if you see any of these outcomes as a strong or direct outcome from either).
- Change**—the extent to which you believe in the potential of change as a positive force for groups
 Probes:
- Are you comfortable with transition? Are you comfortable with initiating new ways of looking at things? Do you see change as bringing new life to an organization? Do you work well in changing environments? Are you open to new ideas? Do you look for new ways to do things? Can you identify the differences between positive and negative change?

- Describe a specific situation when you had an experience that relates to a Change.

Citizenship – the extent to which you believe that you must actively serve the environments and communities to which you are connected.

Probes:

- Do you believe you have responsibilities to your community? Do you give time to make a difference for others? Do you work with others to make your community a better place? Do you have the power to make a difference in your community? Are you willing to act for the rights of others? Do you participate in activities that contribute to the common good? Do you believe you have a civic responsibility to the greater public? Do you value opportunities that allow you to contribute to your community?
- Describe a specific situation when you had an experience that relates to Citizenship.

Collaboration—the extent to which you value working with others in a common effort

Probes:

- Do you work well with others? Can you make a difference when you work with others on a task? Do you actively listen to what others have to say? Do you enjoy working with others toward common goals? Would others describe you as a cooperative group member? Do you feel that collaboration produces better results? Are your contributions recognized by others in the groups you belong to or work with? Are you able to trust people you work with?
- Describe a specific situation when you had an experience that relates to Collaboration.

Commitment—the extent to which you possess commitment and steadfastness in relation to a person, idea, or activity

Probes:

- Are you willing to devote time and energy to things that are important to you? Do you stick with others through difficult times? Are you focused on your responsibilities? Can you be counted on to do your part? Do you follow through on your promises? Do you hold yourself accountable for responsibilities you agreed to?
- Describe a specific situation when you had an experience that relates to Commitment.

Common Purpose—the extent to which you are committed to collaborating with others on shared endeavors

Probes:

- Are you committed to a collective purpose in groups you belong to or have worked with? It is important to develop a common direction in a group in order to get anything done? Do you contribute to the goals of the group? Is it important to you to know other people priorities? Is it important to you to help shape the mission of a group? Do you feel that common values drive an institution? Do you work well when you know the collective values of a group? Do you support what your group is trying to accomplish?
- Describe a specific situation when you had an experience that relates to Common Purpose.

Congruence—the extent to which you think, feel, and behave consistently and honestly toward others

Probes:

- Are your behaviors congruent with your beliefs? Is it important for you to act on your beliefs? Are your actions consistent with your values? Is being seen as a person of integrity important to you? Are you a genuine person? It is easy for you to be truthful?
- Describe a specific situation when you had an experience that relates to Congruence.

Consciousness of Self—the extent to which you are aware of the values, emotions, attitudes, and beliefs that motivate you to action

Probes:

- Are you able to articulate your priorities? Do you have a high self esteem? Are you usually self confident? Do the things you are passionate about have priority in your life? Do you know yourself pretty well? Can you describe your personality or is self-reflection difficult for you? Can you describe how you are similar to other people? Are you comfortable expressing yourself?
- Describe a specific situation when you had an experience that relates to Consciousness of Self.

Controversy with Civility—the extent to which you recognize that differences are inevitable and valuable in groups

Probes:

- Are you open to the ideas of others? Do you feel that creativity can come from conflict at times? Do you value differences in others? Does hearing different opinions enrich your thinking at times or do you always struggle when hearing ideas that are different from your own ideas? Do you feel that greater harmony can come out of disagreement? Do you respect opinions other than your own? Are you uncomfortable when someone disagrees with you? Do you feel that one always wins and another always loses in conflict? Are you comfortable with conflict? Do you share your ideas with others?

- Describe a specific situation when you had an experience that relates to Controversy with Civility.

Any others that I haven't mentioned?

6. Career questions:

Are you a leader today, after graduation, either in career or in your community?

Describe your career experiences since leaving school?

How satisfied are you now? How, if at all, would you like to change?

Can you try to describe your satisfaction with and the importance of your undergraduate education with where you are today?

Closing questions:

I would like to ask some demographic information and then we will be done.

Demographic information

- Age
- Ethnicity or Race
- Gender
- Profession
- Educational Background—Major in college